AMAZING WORLD OF
DC COMICS
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INSIDE AMAZING WORLD

We'd like open this issue with a special thanks to Roy Thomas for all the help he provided in gathering the material for our article, **Remembering: Otto Binder,** and for allowing us to reprint a letter that the late Mr. Binder wrote which was published in Roy's fanzine **ALTER-EGO** #7 in the early sixties. Roy, of course, is now a writer and editor at Marvel Comics, and his kindness is truly appreciated.

While we're at it, let's give a belated thanks to Steve Mitchell, for providing the photos of Lynda Carter we used in **AMAZING WORLD** #15. Now maybe ye editor will no longer see Steve's six-foot-plus frame hulking menacingly outside his door.

Sharp-eyed readers will have already noticed that there are two regular features that are missing this issue, our **Direct Currents** column and **The Legion Outpost. Direct Currents,** as many of you already know, has become a separate **MONTHLY** newsletter, to make sure that you can get up-to-date reports on what's happening at DC, and an advance look at upcoming projects. It will contain all the news items, while **AMAZING WORLD** will continue to carry articles of a more general nature, with a more in-depth look at the subjects. If you haven't seen **DIRECT CURRENTS** yet, check out the ads in our comics.

The Legion Outpost was squeezed out this time by space limitations, which prompts us to ask you how you feel about the format of this feature. Do you enjoy seeing the new characters created by your fellow-fans as applicants in the Legion? Or would you prefer a look at some of the villains the Legion has faced in the past? Or perhaps you would like to see more about the organization and equipment of the Legion? Maybe you'd rather we drop the feature entirely, and devote the space to another article or another page of letters. We want to know your opinions and desires on the matter, so we can make it **YOUR** kind of feature.

Two more woodchucks join the **AMAZING WORLD** staff this issue. **Mike W. Barr,** who was recently hired as a proofreader at DC has contributed two interviews this time; one with **Marvel Family** writer, E. Nelson Bridwell, and the other with one of the best-known of all of **Captain Marvel's** artists, Kurt Schaffenberger, in collaboration with Jack C. Harris. Take a bow, Mike . . . then get back to proofreading.

Our other woodchuck is also a Mike . . . **Mike Catron,** recently hired as an assistant to our Public Relations ace, Mike Gold. We don't have a sample of Mr. Catron's literary ability this issue, but it's a sure bet that we'll be tapping his experience as co-editor of fandom's **COMICS JOURNAL** in the near-future.

Next issue, we'll take a look at the impact **SCIENCE-FICTION** has made on comics, with a behind-the-scenes look at DC's current galaxy-spanning feature . . . **STAR HUNTERS,** as well as look at some of the great science-fiction features of the past, including an interview with Alfred Bester, who was writing comics before he became the well-known science-fiction author that he is today. Join us then, won't you?—Cary Burkett

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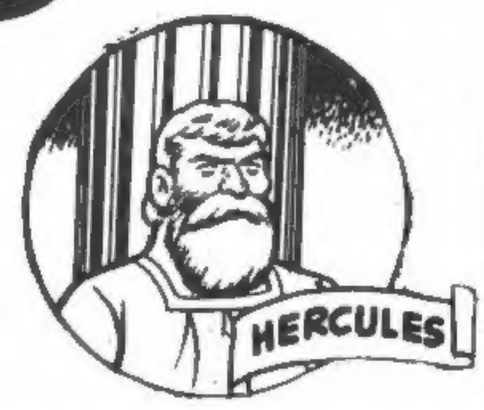


by E. NELSON BRIDWELL

Let's start by making one thing clear: Shazam is **not** that wavy-haired hero with the red suit. He **is** that old man with the long, white beard and the dark blue robes. It seems too bad Marvel Comics pre-empted the **Captain Marvel** title so we are unable to use it—especially since the World's Mightiest Mortal is much better known than the Kree warrior who—in his original conception, at least—bore a stronger resemblance to the early **Superman.**

But let's get back to the character who actually gave his name to the comic mag and the late TV show: Shazam! (The confusion was doubtless compounded by the omission of the title character from the video version.) Anyway, what do we actually know about him?

He was first seen in **Whiz Comics** #2 (which was actually the first issue, but we've told that story before and it's too involved to go into here. Besides, I've told it in the introduction to **Shazam from the 40s to the 70s,** so why not look there if you want the details?). Newsboy Billy Batson was approached by a mysterious figure (still unidentified) who led him into an abandoned subway tunnel. Boarding a weird-looking train, they were taken to a cavern where stood the statues of the Seven Deadly Enemies of Man: Pride, Envy, Greed, Hatred, Selfishness, Laziness and Injustice. (These were clearly the seven deadly sins, with some names simplified and lust replaced by Injustice for the kiddy trade.)

At the end of the cavern, on a marble throne, sat old Shazam, under a block of granite suspended by a slender, frayed thread. He welcomed Billy by name, explaining that "I know everything." He then magically caused the now familiar chart to appear, showing the powers of Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles and Mercury, the six first letters spelling Shazam's name. "For 3,000 years," he said, "I have used the wisdom, strength, stamina, power, courage, and speed the gods have given me to battle the forces of evil which every day threaten to extinguish man from the face of the Earth . . . And during that time, I have seen everything—known everything—that happened throughout the world, from the highest to the lowest."

But now his days of fighting evil were over—he was passing his powers on to Billy. Speaking the wizard's name transformed the lad into **Captain Marvel.** After Shazam spoke to the hero, Cap said his name again to change back to Billy—and as he did so, the granite block fell, crushing Shazam to powder.

That was it. Shazam was dead—long live **Captain Marvel!** As far as Bill Parker, who wrote the story, was concerned, we were never going to see Shazam again. If only he had known!

Even the advent of the Three Lieutenant Marvels was not enough to restore Shazam to the stage. But in **Whiz** #25, we did get to see him return. Captain Nazi had injured a

boy—Freddy Freeman—so badly he was dying. Billy carried Freddy to the subway tunnel, took the fantastic train, and laid the lad on one of the steps to Shazam's throne. (Why he didn't fly Freddy there as **Captain Marvel** is still a puzzle.) Then Billy lit the brazier beside the throne and summoned the spirit of Shazam. "Who-calls-old-Shazam-from-his-thousand-years-of-sleep?" the apparition asked. After Billy explained, the wizard replied, "What has already come to pass cannot be changed by any power of mine. But you, as Captain Marvel, can, if you will, pass on to this poor boy some of the powers I once gave you." Billy did, and **Captain Marvel Jr.** was created.

Captain Marvel Adventures #18 brought the advent of the third of the major members of the Marvel Family, when Billy discovered he had a long-lost twin sister, Mary, and she discovered she, too, had the Shazam powers. This time there was no train mentioned, though the three kids took "a way Billy alone knows." They were not seen lighting the brazier, either—only being greeted by the old wizard.

Shazam, who had once said he knew everything, lived up to his claim by telling Billy he knew of Mary's existence—and that they would be re-united. He then showed Mary her personal Shazam chart, made up of females rather than males. Doubtless writer Otto Binder did his best, but one of the "goddessses" he picked—Zephyrus—is actually a Greek god!

1945 brought perhaps the greatest change in the conception of Shazam with the first **Marvel Family** issue. In the lead story, Shazam was shown in a place never seen before: "Somewhere far out beyond the realm of Mankind there stands the Rock of Eternity! And old Shazam, the wise Egyptian wizard who once dwelt on Earth, now chisels here an eternal record on the everlasting stone!" That record was the deeds of the Marvel Family! He told of how each was created and of their battle with Black Adam.

Black Adam himself was a powerful departure from the original Shazam of **Whiz** #2. Then, Shazam's nationality had not been mentioned. Now this man who knew the Greek gods and heroes and an Israeli king was Egyptian! What's more, he had once before given the Shazam powers to someone—an Egyptian named Teth-Adam. Strangely, Shazam, who in that first tale had claimed he had used the powers himself for the previous 3,000 years, was now shown looking as old as ever 5,000 years in the past, when he was passing the powers on to Teth-Adam! Strange, too, was the fact that he initially named the new hero Mighty Adam, only renaming him Black Adam after he turned evil—yet his costume was black from the first!

(I reconciled some of the difficulties when I wrote of Black Adam's return recently. Now he was called Black Adam from the first—for Khem, the Egyptian name for their country, meaning "black." I also created a Shazam chart of Egyptian gods, since Solomon, Hercules and Achilles hadn't been born 5,000 years ago.)

HIS MYSTERIOUS GUIDE LEAVES HIM BEFORE AN OLD, OLD MAN SITTING ON A MARBLE THRONE AT THE FAR END OF THE CAVERN.
BILLY BATSON! I AM SHAZAM, THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WIZARD! I HAVE FOUGHT EVIL, BUT MY TIME IS UP! YOU SHALL BE MY SUCCESSOR!
M-ME, SIR?

The following year saw more alterations in the legend. The Marvel Family reached Eternity for the first time! A thief who stumbled on the abandoned subway tunnel stole the book which stood beside Shazam's throne. **Captain Marvel** caught him trying to sell the volume; then the three kids returned it. But when they tried to summon the wizard, nothing happened!

Opening the book, they found this handwritten passage: "On the Rock of Eternity, I, Shazam, am recording the history of the Marvel Family. The Rock of Eternity exists at the end of space and time, far beyond the stars! It can only be reached by a speed faster than light! For when anything goes faster than light, it is thrown out of the normal universe and cast into Eternity." To solve the puzzle of Shazam's no-show, the Marvels did just that.

Shazam, it seems, had, ages before, trapped the spirit of Evil under the Rock of Eternity. Now, after gathering strength, Evil—in his three forms of Sin, Terror and Wickedness—toppled the rock and escaped. That is, until the Marvels caught him and put him back under the Rock for a few more ages.

That year also brought a new foe for **Captain Marvel:** Oggar, the World's Mightiest Immortal. As Shazam explained to Billy in the first chapter of the "Cult of the Curse" serial, "He has a mortal body, but an immortal spirit! 3,000 years ago, he lived in ancient Egypt —and he was my pupil! I taught him wizardry and magic!"

In Chapter 2, Oggar revealed his full story. "Thousands of years ago, in the ancient world, Shazam was the leader of seven great heroes—Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles and Mercury—"

"You mean six," Cap said.

"Ah, but there was a seventh—**me, Oggar!** . . . yes, there were seven of us, and old Shazam's name was really—**Shazamo!** The first letters of all our names made his name, as our great leader!"

(Yet Black Adam, 2,000 years before, said "Shazam"—not "Shazamo"!)

He went on to tell how they were the gods of the ancient world (a strange thing to say about the Jewish monarch, Solomon!) and lived in splendor. Shazam was here shown as younger, his beard shorter, despite the older Shazam of an earlier day in the Black Adam story. Oggar had then tried to take Shazam's throne, only to be thwarted by the power of good. Oggar was banished to the mortal world, but listened as Shazam predicted his own passing and the creation of **Captain Marvel.** Shazam then smashed the O from his name on his throne with one blow of his fist. Oggar decided to wait 3,000 years, until all the seven others had passed on to the "higher world," when he would have but one enemy, **Captain Marvel.**

(A strange puzzle emerges here. 3,000 years in the future is referred to by Shazam as "the 20th century." The pagan gods are anticipating the Christian calendar!)

In subsequent re-tellings of Cap's origin, certain changes were

made. The train was missing (until **Shazam** #1 restored it), Shazam identified himself as Egyptian, and his spirit appeared after his death to tell Cap how to summon him by lighting the brazier.

One of these was included in "The Plot against the Universe," in **Captain Marvel Adventures** #100. In this tale, Shazam explained that he could exist in spirit form only because of a bracelet made of an element unknown to Earthly science—Shazamium. "Without it, I would vanish utterly! Whoever wears this can adopt ethereal form! And it also enables me to whisk back and forth from the Rock of Eternity, in the wink of an eye!" It might be added that Shazam's castle on the Rock had been established as early as 1947. That same year, the old wizard was shown in the first dynasty of Egypt —as an old man!

Perhaps Shazam was a good deal older than Bill Parker had ever imagined! 1952 brought a story which seemed to establish this.

King Kull, the Beastman, brought the statues of the Seven Deadly Enemies back to life! For, as Shazam said, "Those were not mere statues, but seven evil gods whom I defeated and turned to stone long ago! But now, released from bondage, they can bring about the downfall of man!"

Surely this battle must have taken place even before the beginnings of civilization in Egypt.

But is Shazam really an Egyptian name? Well, there is a story of an ancient wizard named Zazamonkh, who served Snofru, father of Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid. This Zazamonkh was called "the scribe of the book"—and Shazam has a book. But the names are still not identical—could Zazamonkh have had to get rid of several more evil gods to shorten his name? Not likely.

In fact, the only person actually named Shazam that we know of was Shazam Safin, a Russian who won the Olympic Gold Medal for Greco-Roman Lightweight Wrestling in 1952.

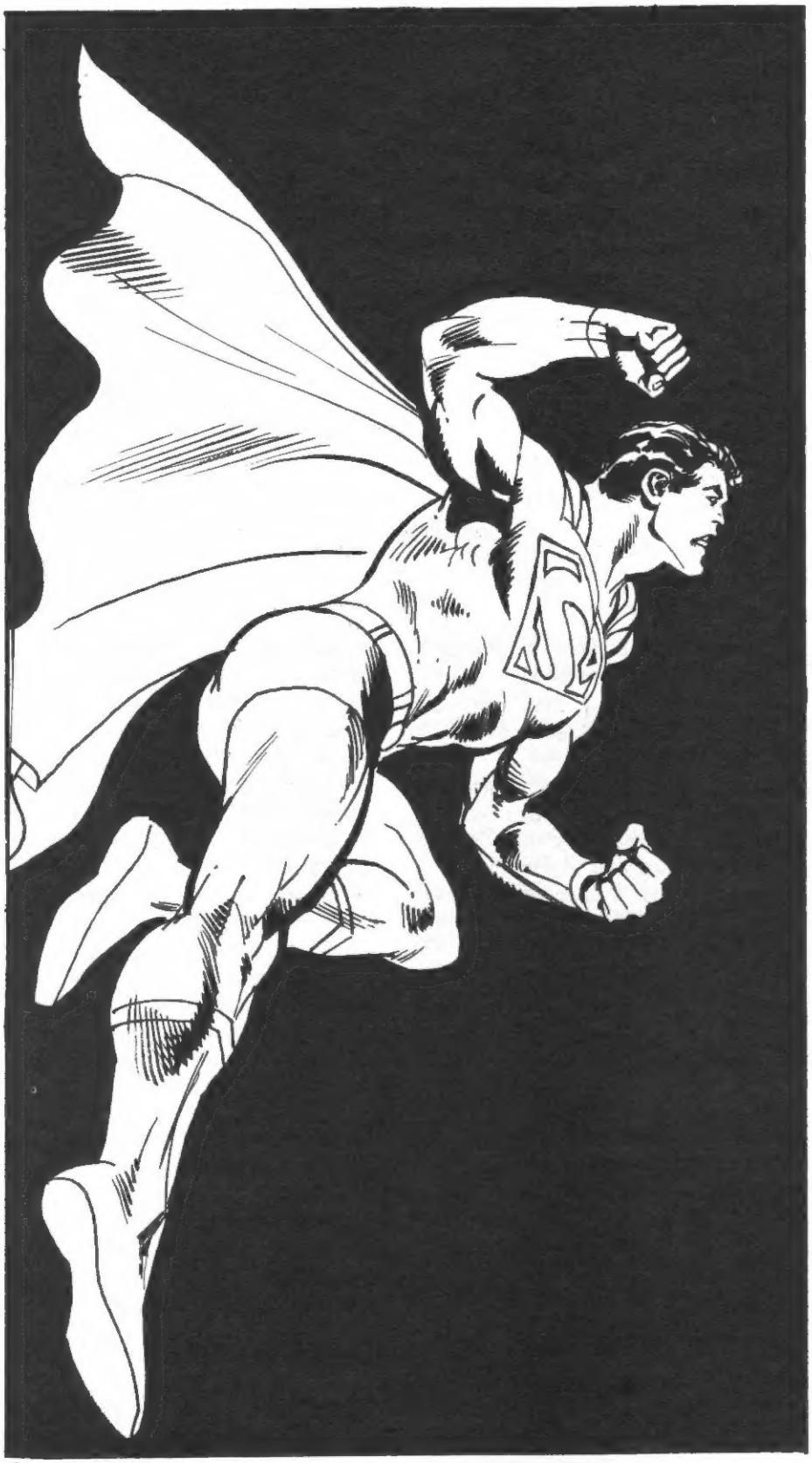
But leaving the origin of the name aside, Shazam himself has certainly undergone many changes. First he was one gifted by the gods with powers he was passing on to **Captain Marvel.** He became a leader of the gods even in ancient times, His 3,000-year life-span was lengthened to considerably longer than 5,000 years.

He was killed, yet lived on in spirit form. In one story, he needed a bracelet of Shazamium to survive in that form. In others, Sivana could go to the Rock of Eternity and actually threaten to kill this man who had already died once!

It is not even certain who throws the thunderbolts that change Billy, Freddy and Mary. In many stories, it is Zeus—but some have Shazam doing it himself!

What an enigma this old wizard is! Perhaps some day we'll put it all together, iron out the wrinkles, and get the full Shazam story. Meantime, let's be happy he gave us three fantastic heroes!

WHEN TITANS CLASH...



In which **Captain Marvel** Is Killed, Not By Sivana, Mr. Mind, Or Captain Nazi, But By The Most Powerful Entity Of All—**A Lawyer!**

"SHAZAM!" pleaded Billy Batson.

"Overruled!" screamed the Judge, warning the boy that another outburst of thunder and lightning would result in his being held in contempt.

Superman proceeded with the prosecution by calling a parade of witnesses: Fred MacMurray, who accused the defendant of stealing his face; Freddy Freeman, who turned witness for the prosecution by claiming that Billy Batson kidnapped him and locked him a closet until he was brainwashed into agreeing to join the Marvel Family as Captain Marvel Jr.; Sterling Morris, who was tricked into admitting on the stand that Billy Batson was, indeed, a reporter like Clark Kent; and even old wizard Shazam himself, who broke down and admitted he had read **ACTION COMICS** #1 (which possibly influenced him sub-consciously) before he turned Billy Batson into **Captain Marvel.**

Yes, that was the was the way the most colorful law suit in comic book history might have unraveled, but actually it was more like any other series of decisions and appeals that drag on for twelve years—tiresome, time-consuming, and expensive. Though the action was begun on September 5, 1941, the stage was actually set in an earlier case from 1940 called **Detective Comics, Inc. v. Bruns Publishing, Inc.**

DC's **Superman** had been on the stands less than a year when the first issue of **WONDER COMICS** was released by Bruns Publishing's comic book division known as Fox. The date was May 1939, and the lead feature was a new character

...IN COURT!

Written by Michael Uslan, J.D.
With an Assist by
J. Cheever Loophole, L.S.M.F.T.

called **Wonderman.** It was drawn by a budding artist by the name of Will Eisner. The executives at DC in those early days included Harry Donenfeld and M.C. Gaines. Their belief was that **Wonderman** was too close to **Superman** in character and story. Wishing to protect the copyright of their hot **Superman** character, they instituted a suit, claiming that the copyrights they owned on **ACTION COMICS** to date (11 issues at this time) were being infringed by Bruns.

The Judges hearing the case for the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit (New York City), were not comic book readers. However, their impartial look at the comic books of the two companies proved to them that Bruns had indeed come too close to **Superman.** Their analysis was as follows:

Each publication portrays a man of miraculous strength and speed . . . Each (hero) at times conceals his strength beneath ordinary clothing but after removing his cloak stands revealed in full panoply in a skin-tight acrobatic costume. The only real difference between them is that Superman wears a blue uniform and Wonderman a red one. Each is termed the champion of the oppressed. Each is shown running toward a full moon 'off into the night', and each is shown crushing a gun in his powerful hands. Superman is pictured as stopping a bullet with his person and Wonderman as arresting and throwing back shells. Each is depicted as shot by three men, yet as leaping over a twenty story building, and Wonderman as leaping from building to building. Superman and Wonderman are each endowed with sufficient strength to rip open a steel door. Each is described as being the strongest man in the world and each as battling against evil and injustice.

That kind of analysis did not bode well for **Wonderman,** nor **Captain Marvel** and the others waiting in the shadows. Bruns' defense was centered on the idea that **Superman** himself was not original but merely a comic version of Hercules and other Mythological heroes. The Court disagreed, finding an original arrangement of incidents, and infringement by the defendant of the literary and pictorial details in the **Superman** strip. Probably the most significant part of this decision was the Circuit Court's change of the decree that had been issued by a lower court. If the Circuit Court had left ther lower decision intact, it probably would have meant that DC was entitled to a monopoly of the "mere character of a Superman who is a blessing to mankind". In simple English, that decision would have barred the creation of any non-DC superheroes! There would have been no Golden Age of Comcs, no **Spider-Man,** no **Captain America,** no **Captain Marvel,** possibly no **Plastic Man,** etc. Today's stands would be filled with DC super-heroes, Archie, Richie Rich, Romance Comics, Mickey Mouse, and Howard the Duck . . . maybe. The decree was strong enough, however, to take care of any heroes that tread the **Superman** line too closely, and the years have seen such unnotables as **Superwoman, The Double Life of Private Strong,** and an early Fawcett character called **Master Man** bite the dust. They posed no real legal problems, but the Big Red Cheese refused to give up without a fight . . . and what a battle it was!

By March 1948, when **Superman** finally dragged **Captain Marvel** into the courtroom for the trial, **Detective Comics Inc.** had merged with **All-American Comics Inc.** to form **National Comics Publications, Inc.** National, represented by ace trail attorney Louis Nizer, brought action against **Fawcett Publications Inc.,** who published the comic books Cap starred in, and **Fawcett Publications Inc.,** and **Republic Pictures,** who produced the movie serial **THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL** in 1940. DC's claim was infringement of the copyrighted feature appearing in **ACTION COMICS** and **SUPERMAN MAGAZINE.** The charges claimed that Fawcett copied DC's material and used the copied material in **CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES, WHIZ COMICS, CAPTAIN MARVEL JR., MARY MARVEL COMICS, WOW COMICS, AMERICA'S GREATEST COMICS,** and **MASTER COMICS;** that the movie serial did the same; and that merchandise using the figure of **Captain Marvel** constituted unfair competition. This last charge succeeded in scaring off any licensees who were contemplating producing games or toys based on **Captain Marvel** rather than **Superman.** As a result, over the years Fawcett was forced to produce and distribute **Captain Marvel** merchandise almost exclusively on its own. In defense of the charges, Fawcett claimed that it did not infringe, that **Superman's** copyrights were invalid or abandoned, and that there was no unfair competition. Republic, meanwhile, filed a cross-claim against Fawcett that stated if Republic is held liable, Republic shall have a judgment over Fawcett for the amount awarded to DC. This was based on contract agreements in which Fawcett had warranted to Republic that they owned the **Captain Marvel** copyrights free and clear.

In stating the facts of the case and a history of the two companies, Judge Coxe made two interesting remarks. Based on the exhibits of comic books he had been shown, he lists the first issue of **WHIZ COMICS** as appearing in January 1940. Since the "first" issue of **Whiz** numbered "2" and carried a February 1940 date when it appeared on the stands, credence is given to the rumor that there were a couple of copies produced of an actual **Whiz** #1. No Collector has yet been able to turn up one of these rare gems. Also, the Judge included the following sentence in his statement of the facts: "Captain Marvel closely resembled Superman in his athletic figure and in his costume, as well as in the superhuman feats he performed." That's quite a statement for a judge to make before the case is presented. It was just a hint of things to come.

Superman's initial strategy was to get **Captain Marvel** to admit that his creators, developers, and portrayers had access to **ACTION COMICS** and **SUPERMAN COMCIS** before the Big Red Cheese was published. This fact was conceded by Fawcett. The next step was for **Superman** to try to

prove copying. Some Fawcett employees swore under oath that some Fawcett executives told them to imitate **Superman** in dialogue and script as much as possible. A freelance artist claimed that C. C. Beck, **Captain Marvel's** first artist, told him that he copied **Superman.** Beck subsequently took the stand and denied this. Expert witnesses were called in by each side and succeeded in totally contradicting each other. The Judge's remarks after this session were that "It would serve no useful purpose to recite in detail the conflicting testimony, for I am satisfied from all the evidence that there was actual copying." Comic book fans who have seen both **Superman** and **Captain Marvel** stories can draw their own conclusion as to whether the Judge was right or not. Some of the similarities that convinced Coxe were: Same physique: clean-cut faces; acrobat costumes; boots and cape for flying; leaping great distances; flying; strength and speed; imperviousness to bullets, shells, explosions, knives, and poisons; similar settings; substantially all the feats performed by **Superman** are LATER duplicated by **Captain Marvel;** identical phrases, expressions, and dialogue; secret identities as normal human beings; both reporters; both have mad scientist enemies who resemble each other; they got their jobs the same way; etc. The two differences listed are that **Captain Marvel** has no love interest like Lois Lane while **Superman** has no ever-present evil enemy like Sivana.

Now it was **Captain Marvel's** turn to attack. To do so, he turned to the **Superman** newspaper comic strips being syndicated at the time by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate. He showed that **Superman's** creators, Siegel and Shuster, agreed to do a daily comic strip starring **Superman.** These new strips would be copyrighted by McMClure, but the copyrights would revert to DC at the end of six months, whereas DC would reprint them in **ACTION COMICS** or **SUPERMAN COMICS.** "By a separate agreement Siegel and Shuster were employed by Detective on the same day to do the work, and and they agreed that all the material should be owned by Detective and, at its option, copyrighted in its name or in the names of parties designated by it." The trouble occurred when all but a very few of the strips syndicated around the country appeared without the correct copyright notice (The C in a circle followed by the year and the name McClure Newspaper Syndicate) or without any at all. The lower court held that there was an abandonment of the copyrights on **Superman** by DC through McClure and that with no valid DC copyrights, Fawcett had nothing to infringe. Case dismissed. **Captain Marvel, Mary Marvel, Captain Marvel Junior, Uncle Marvel, Hoppy the Marvel Bunny,** and old **Shazam** were joined by **Bulletman** and **Bulletgirl, Ibis the Invincible** and **Tala, Spy Smasher, Mr. Scarlet and Pinky, Golden Arrow, Captain Midnight,** and their lawyers, as they celebrated next door at Mario's Restaurant with beer and pizza.

Perhaps they would've lived happily ever after, but DC appealed the decision to the United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, and found themselves before one of the most famous judges of all time, Learned Hand. In reviewing the lower court opinions, Hand concluded: "The evidence . . . leaves no possible doubt that the copying was deliberate; indeed it takes scarcely more than a glance at corresponding strips of Superman and Captain Marvel to assure the observer that the plagiarism was deliberate and unabashed." But the lower court had shouted that there was abandonment of copyrights by DC. Not so, said Hand! In order for DC to have abandoned its copyrights on **Superman** it has to do so by some "overt act" that shows its purpose as being one of surrendering rights and allowing the public to copy **Superman.** There was no evidence of this requisite intent by either DC or McClure. The fact that many of the McClure strips carried some kind of notice showed no intent to give up the rights. Logically, they would have no conceivable reason to do so. As long as the title **Superman** was retained as DC's property and DC merely licensed out the property, they did not lose their hero because of McClure's negligence. If McClure, in its contract with DC, promised to affix a copyright notice and didn't, DC could end the license and sue for damages without losing their rights to **Superman.** Similarly, McClure had the same right of action against any of its newspaper clients if its contract with them called for a promise to affix the copyright notice as set on the mat of the strip McClure provided them with. Still, there must be at least some attempt at notice to save the copyright. If there is a total omission of the notice so that the infringer doesn't have any actual notice that there is a copyright, the copyright becames invalid. The question for the Court was how many copies of newspapers with total omission of notices would be enough to invalidate a copyright? The cases show that "very few" would still be sufficient to preserve the copyright. Hand interpreted the term "very few" generously and held no abandonment or forfeiture here by DC or McClure. It also disallowed claims of abandonment for trivial mistakes in DC's notices on Superman #5 and #6, which were not listed as copyrighted by Detective Comics Inc. as would be correct, but by Superman Inc. The Court found Superman Inc. to be a "dummy" company for DC with the same officers, headquarters and personnel. The mistakes, therefore, were insignificant.

The way Judge Hand and the others saw one super-hero to be a deliberate and obvious copy of an earlier one seemed to show an ignorance of comic books both as an industry and as an art. No mention was made that **Captain Marvel** was a cartoony parody of **Superman.** No research into the character treatments, story or art styles was ever made. That same reasoning today could bring conclusion that ALL IN THE FAMILY and I LOVE LUCY are the same because both are comedies about families, etc. etc. etc. Hand's knowledge and opinion of the case and the parties involved is perhaps revealed when

he denies DC's claim of unfair competition. Hand says that the buyers of comic books probably wouldn't be misled into thinking that a Fawcett comic is a DC Comic or vice-versa. It is this likelihood of buyers being misled that determines unfair competition. But Hand goes on to imply that this doesn't matter in the case of comic books because no buyer knows or cares which company produces which comic book. In denying DC's claim, Hand says, "In the case of these silly pictures nobody cares who is the producer—least of all, children who are the chief readers; the strips sell because they amuse and please, and they amuse and please because they are what they are, not because they come from (DC)." Would a DC or Marvel fan agree with this? Is this a statement based on ignorance of the comic book publishing? Is this wise dictum from a respected judge? The truth? You decide.

But that was not the end of it. The judgement in favor of Fawcett was reversed and the case was remanded back to the district court for further proceedings. In 1952, Judge Learned Hand issued a clarification of his opinion. First, he said that DC's request for an injuction to stop Fawcett from publishing is a question for the district court to decide. Second, he stated clearly that he found Fawcett to have infringed **Superman.** Third, and to everyone's chagrin, he said that it was not determined just which Fawcett strips infringed just which DC strips. "That will demand a comparison of each strip put in suit by the plaintiff with Fawcett's strip which the plaintiff asserts does so closely copy that particular strip. Each such comparison really involves the decision of a separate claim; there is no escape from it." How true! In other words, DC had to go through every **Superman** story published through 1952 and find panels or whole stories that show **Superman** doing or saying something that **Captain Marvel** later seemed to copy. To do this, DC then had to go through every **Captain Marvel** story ever published and find all offending panels and stories. Fawcett then had to go through every **Captain Marvel** story and try to find an earlier picture of **Captain Marvel** doing what **Superman** did. Also, Fawcett had to go through the adventures of all other non-Fawcett and non-DC super-hero comics published to date to try to locate scenes of another hero doing or saying what **Superman** did or said BEFORE **Superman** did or said them! Sound confusing? It was! Numerous huge scrapbooks were prepared by each side at huge costs of time and money. Whole staff of researchers had to be hired, old comics . . . literally thousands of them . . . had to be bought and cut up and pasted into the scrapbooks. Lawyers had to inspect each one and their fees grew larger and larger. Finally in one last outburt of sanity, Fawcett screamed "Enough!" It was 1953. Comic books were in the worst sale slump they had ever been in. A censorship board loomed ahead. The federal governement was planning an industry-wide investigation. The Super-hero trend was almost dead. Economically, it just wasn't worth battling anymore. It would be better for Fawcett to close their comics operation than to continue this legal war. The volumes of evidence and the huge scrapbooks were locked away in the DC vault. Because comics were selling so poorly, Fawcett closed down its whole line, including the non-**Captain Marvel** titles. Some titles like **HOPALONG CASSIDY** were sold to DC. Others like **SIX GUN HEROES** and **CLINT CURTIS WITH THE ROAD KNIGHTS** made their way to Charlton. Charlton even took **Hoppy the Marvel Bunny,** only to avoid a new lawsuit they changed the color of his costume from red to blue, removed the lightning bolt insignia, changed the magic word of SHAZAM! to ALIZAM!, and changed the title of the strip to **Hoppy the Magic Bunny.** Fawcett settled out of court with DC for a reported $400,000 plus court costs. They also agreed never again to publish **Captain Marvel** and the **Marvel Family.**

EPILOGUE

1. Coincidentally, the last issue of **THE MARVEL FAMILY** featured a story called "And Then There Were None." On the cover, the balloon read "Holy Moley! What's happened to the Marvel Family?" The late Otto Binder who wrote that story swore that it was just one of life's coincidences.

2. It seems that while the Big Red Cheese dwelt in comic book limbo, the trademark on the title **Captain Marvel** expired and no one at Fawcett thought it worthwhile to renew. As a result, the sixties saw two versions of comic books called **Captain Marvel** (and one called **Captain Shazam** which never saw the light of day on the newsstand). The version by Marvel Comics was still around when Fawcett agreed to lease its old characters to DC, and so the original **Captain Marvel** couldn't legally get back his own title. Thus was born **SHAZAM!,** featuring The World's Mighest Mortal. Why can't DC use **Captain Marvel's** name on the covers? Because according to the law of trademarks. . .

TO BE CONTINUED ON THE NEW YORK STATE BAR EXAM

E. NELSON BRIDWELL ON SHAZAM:

I AM HAVING IMMENSE FUN!

Conducted
by Mike W. Barr

No **Shazam**-oriented issue of **Amazing World** would be complete without the views of Supreme Shazam! Scribe E. Nelson Bridwell. Besides writing and editing many titles, he is also Unofficial DC Historian, managing, **some**how, to retain an immense amount of knowledge about virtually every member of the DC Universe. His value to DC can best be summed up by quoting a staff member: "If Nelson didn't exist, we would have to invent him."

Amazing World recently cornered Nelson between the Rock of Eternity and Station WHIZ and obtained his opinions on Captian Marvel—past, present, and future.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH DC, NELSON?

I started here on January 13, 1964, as Mort Weisinger's assistant. My first scripting assignments were science-fiction stories for Jack Schiff. My first writing for Mort

was restricted to a few extra panels on a **Krypto** or **Superman** story.

YOU'RE THE FIRST FAN TO BREAK INTO PRODOM. HOW DID IT FEEL?

It's something the old pros could never feel . . . something fantastic . . . you've grown up reading these characters, and suddenly you're not only working with them, you're helping to control their destinies!

HOW FAR BACK DO YOU AND CAPTAIN MARVEL GO?

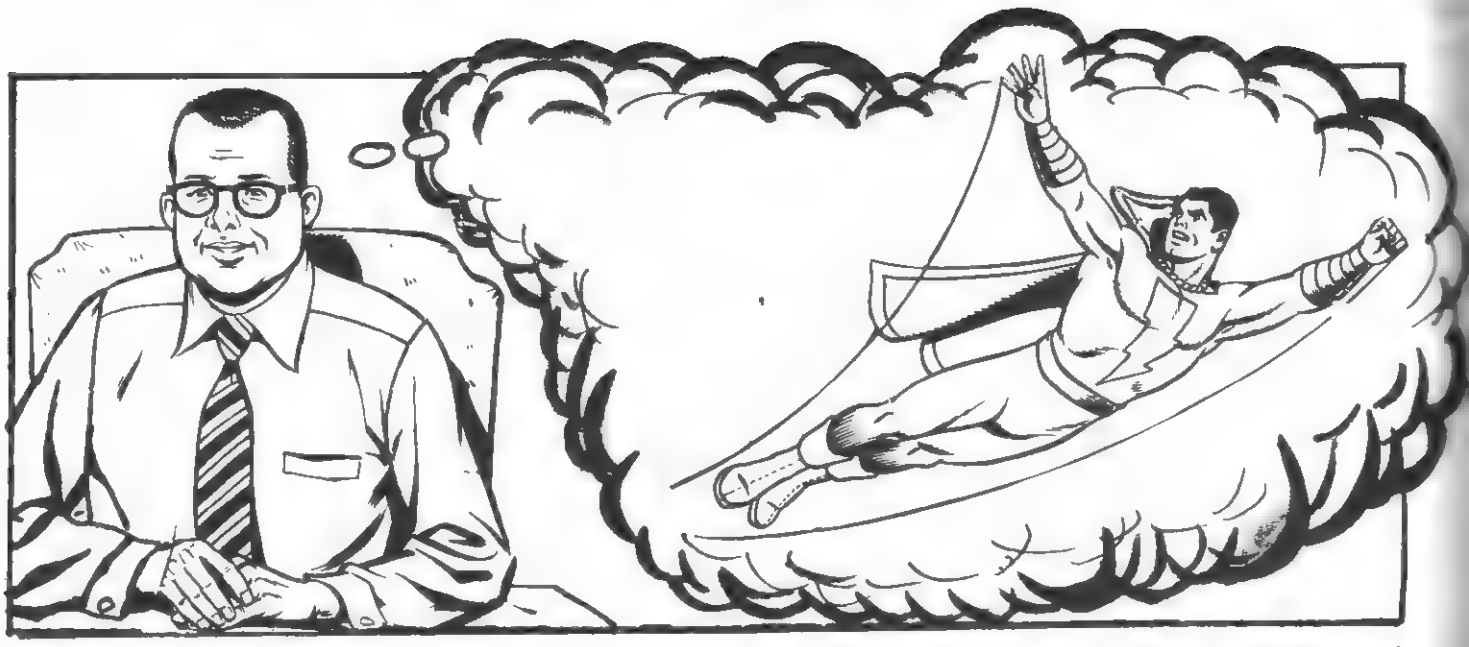
I think I first started reading **Captain Marvel** just about the time **Mary Marvel** was introduced, that was in the early forties. I still remember buying that issue. I dropped out a year or two before the end in 1953.

DO YOU FIND IT AT ALL IRONIC THAT THE CHARACTER NOW BILLED AS *"THE ORIGINAL CAPTAIN MARVEL"* WAS ONCE ACCUSED OF BEING A "DIRECT COPY" OF *SUPERMAN*?

I suppose so. When you come right down to it, that's what the Fawcett publishers **intended** it to be. That's not what it turned out to be, thanks to some fantastically original writing and art, particularly by people like Otto Binder, Bill Woolfolk, Manly Wade Wellman, Rod Reed, and others. They created something—wonderful.

AS ONE OF THE FEW WRITERS WHO'S WRITTEN BOTH CAPTAIN MARVEL AND SUPERMAN, HOW DO YOU SEE THEM? IS ONE A "DIRECT COPY" OF THE OTHER?

As far as powers go, **Captain Marvel** is very much like **Superman,** except for for the supersenses. He also seemed to be not **quite** as invulnerable. I remember stories where he would be affected by itching or sneezing power. The Marvels were immune to **bullets,** but not always to **irritation. Superman** and **Captain Marvel** were



handled in such different fashions that they ultimately just—diverged. Their origins had something to do with that, I suppose. **Superman** was basically a realistic science-fiction character, whereas **Captain Marvel** was a magical hero, and took off in some wild directions. Since he had the powers of gods, gods frequently took part in the stories.

HOW DID OTTO BINDER VIEW SUPERMAN AND CAP? DID HE VIEW A SUPERMAN STORY AS MERELY A RE-WRITTEN CAP STORY? OR VICE VERSA?

I sometimes wonder about that. There was a story in **Lois Lane,** years back, in which he (Binder) mentioned a certain diamond which was "Cut in the shape of the **lightning bolt** on **Superman's** chest." You can see what was in his mind. It was one of those little slips that occasionally happen when someone has worked on one character for many years, and is now doing another.

HOW ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE HEROES AND THEIR ALTER EGOS? WAS THE DIFFERENCE REFLECTED THERE?

Yes, particularly when the alter ego is a **boy,** and the hero is a **man. Captain Marvel** was a boy in a man's body. I remember once, when **Captain Marvel** saved a circus, instead of refusing a reward, or giving it to charity, he asked for a lifetime pass for Billy Batson.

THE DIFFERENCE WAS REFLECTED IN THE VILLAINS AND SUPPORTING CHARACTERS, WASN'T IT? TALKY TAWNY COMES TO MIND.

Yes, absolutely. I'm afraid he wasn't handled too well in some of our early **Shazam** issues because the writers didn't realize that Tawny was an **animal** character who reflected **human** foibles.

LET'S TALK A LITTLE ABOUT *MR. MIND.*

Mr. Mind is one villain who cannot do things for himself, because he's trapped in the body he was born in, the body of a worm. Often, he won't reveal his appearance to others, but just speak to them.

THAT WAS ONE OF THE GIMMICKS OF THE OLD MR. MIND SERIAL, WASN'T IT?

It was, indeed. He was originally conceived just as a voice, until the day came when the writers knew they'd have to reveal him. Otto Binder recalled that they finally chose, after much though, to make him the last thing anybody would expect—a **worm!** Everyone thought it would be a good gag, never dreaming he'd be one of the most popular villains of the Golden Age.

WE'LL HAVE TO MENTION SIVANA, TOO. LIKE LUTHOR, HE'S A BALD, EVIL, SCIENTIST, BUT HIS MOTIVATION IS DIFFERENT.

He was a brilliant scientist who was born before his time. People laughed at his theories, so he built himself a space-ship, and went to Venus, where he raised his family. He went over the edge, and decided he was the rightful ruler of the Universe. I'm bringing back his two elder children, Beautia and Magnificus. Beautia, being tall and blonde, seemed like the perfect match for Captain Nazi.

WILL WE EVER FIND OUT ANYTHING ABOUT MRS. SIVANA?

That's a very good question, and I wish I had a very good answer. We may dream something up someday, but I haven't worked it out. But then, I don't know anything about Billy and Mary Batson's parents, or Freddy Freeman's. I haven't doped out the complete origin of Shazam yet, either.

***CAPTAIN MARVEL* IS MORE "LIGHT-HEARTED" THAN *SUPERMAN,* BUT THERE HAS TO BE AN UNDERPINNING OF REALITY. WHEN BILLY IS GAGGED AND TIED TO A BUZZSAW, HE HAD TO BE IN DANGER OF LOSING HIS LIFE FOR THE SUSPENSE TO BUILD. DO YOU FEEL THAT DC'S EARLY**

SHAZAM PLAYED UP THE HUMOR TOO MUCH?

Yes, we had what **should** have been back-ups in the old days, as leads. I've tried to get away from that in the revamped **Shazam,** and it seems to be working.

JULIE SCHWARTZ WAS CHOSEN AS THE FIRST EDITOR OF THE REVIVED _SHAZAM. CAPTAIN MARVEL_ IS 180 DEGREES AWAY FROM ALL THE SUPER-HEROES HE'S EVER DONE. HOW DID HE LIKE THE IDEA OF BEING EDITOR?

He read **Captain Marvel Adventures** #100, and fell in love with the character. He actually asked for the assignment.

WHOSE IDEA WAS IT TO GET THE CHARACTER'S CO-CREATOR C.C. BECK, TO DRAW THE REVIVED BOOK?

I've forgotten who brought it up, but we got in touch with him, and he was willing to do it. And for a while, it worked out fine, but eventually he just got tired of deadlines, and there were a few disagreements about content too, in which Beck may have been partially right. It was quite a thrill to have my scripts drawn by the original artist of the character, though. Kurt Schaffenberger came back, too. I asked him how it felt to be drawing the Marvels again, and he said "Weird". Years ago, in a **Lois Lane** story Kurt drew, there was a splash which showed **Superman** beating up a group of super-heroes, and one of the heroes in the background was **Captain Marvel.**

IN MANY WAYS, DC'S SHAZAM HIT ITS PEAK WITH THE COMING OF THE SATURDAY MORNING CBS-TV SHOW, AND THE BOOK WAS CHANGED SOMEWHAT TO ACCOMMODATE THE TV VERSION. DID THIS ALTER THE WAY YOU SCRIPTED THE BOOK?

I was given the assignment just when that happened. What I had to do, mainly, was figure out some way to do something **like** the TV version without destroying the basic concept of the characters. The biggest problem, to my mind, was this 'Mentor' character. He has nothing to do with the strip. It occurred to me that the character was a lot like Uncle Dudley, so I suggested we make him Dudley, and, fortunately, it was accepted. The TV people insisted on that "electronic brazier" instead of **lighting** the brazier. I called it the Eterni-Phone, but felt it was rather silly. To do the book straight would have been to throw away the best parts of the strip, and this was something I couldn't do. The greatest absurdity of the TV show was that they completely omitted the title character—Shazam! All the Shazam mysticism was missing, and this is something I'm trying to get back.

WEREN'T YOU SOME TYPE OF CREATIVE CONSULTANT TO THE SHOW?

For the first year or so, I was reading the scripts, until they stopped sending them in time for us to read them before they were filmed, so no changes could be made. The TV writers had not been reading much **Shazam.** They **had** been reading **Green Lantern,** and had Billy and Captain Marvel exclaiming "Great Elders!" like GL's "Great Guardians!" This we put our foot down on—we insisted on "Holy Moley", and they complied.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE 1940'S CAPTAIN MARVEL SERIAL, WITH TOM TYLER?

I saw it when it was first released, and I loved it, until the end, where they took away Billy's powers. This is the sort of thing one finds when comics are put into another medium. They don't stop to think what **could** be done or **should** be

done with a character. We've seldom had comic characters done really well in other media. Just one example—I've seen some of the Kryptonian costumes for the **Superman** picture, and I frankly think Wayne Boring and Curt Swan did better costume designs.

THE SERIAL, THEN, WAS A MORE OR LESS FAITHFUL DEPICTION OF CAPTAIN MARVEL?

Reasonably. The origin was changed, but at least they had Shazam in it—and a Shazam who **looked** like Shazam in the comics. Curiously, one of the characters in the serial did become a regular in the strip for a while—Whitey Murphy. I've recently revived him, when I felt Billy needed somebody to talk to.

THAT SOUNDS A LOT LIKE THE STORY OF INSPECTOR HENDERSON OF THE SUPERMAN TV SHOW—FROM THE FILM INTO THE COMIC.

Or Professor Pepperwinkle. I might add that there's also something else special about the story that introduced Whitey Murphy—it was the only Captain Marvel story ever **written** as well as **drawn** by C.C. Beck.

YOU'VE RECENTLY COMPILED WHAT MAY BE THE BEST OF THE *CAPTAIN MARVEL* STORIES IN YOUR BOOK "SHAZAM FROM THE 40'S TO THE 70'S." DID YOU EDIT THIS BOOK THE SAME WAY AS THE *SUPERMAN* AND *BATMAN HARDCOVERS*?

Not really, because I had little to do with the contents of the Superman and Batman books. Someone from the publishing company edited those. In the Shazam book, I chose most of the stories, and if I do say so, a fairly good selection. The only ones I was distinctly told to pick out, which I would have picked anyway, were the origins of Captain Marvel, Sivana, Mary Marvel, and Junior. One of the full-length novels I included was the only Marvel Family story that was done in the style of the **All-Star**—three chapters drawn by the regular artists of Captain Marvel, Mary Marvel and Junior. I also included the **only** story from the Golden Age that included the **entire** Marvel Family—**Captain Marvel, Mary Marvel, Junior, Uncle Marvel,** and the **Lieutenants Marvel** and Sivana as the villain—and it was **seven pages** long.

LET'S TALK A LITTLE ABOUT THE "NEW LOOK" OF SHAZAM. AS IS APPARENT FROM THE COVER OF THIS ISSUE, ALAN WEISS IS ONE OF THE NEW ARTISTS. WHO ELSE WILL BE DRAWING IT?

Al did one issue. After that, it's being taken over by Don Newton. Just this morning, I saw some pages of Newton's work inked by Schaffenberger—it is beautiful.

COMBINING THE BEST OF THE NEW AND THE BEST OF THE ORIGINAL.

Yes. The characters are still more realistically drawn, and yet there's that touch of the original there, so the styles are tied together. I'm glad Weiss did the one he did, that was the issue that brought back Captain Nazi. He fought Junior, and, to my mind, this is something that had to be done by a very realistic artist. I remember thinking at the time it was too bad

SHAZAM! PRESENTS A NEW STORY OF
CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.
HA-HA! WHILE I'M PROTECTED BY THIS ARMOR, COPS CAN'T STOP ME--AND NEITHER CAN YOU, CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.!
STORY BY: E. Nelson Bridwell
ART BY: Schaffenberger
EDITED BY: Julius Schwartz
HOLY MOLEY! THAT CROOK'S SUIT OF NEWSPAPERS MAKES HIM AS INVULNERABLE AS I AM!
POW!
BANG!
Dear Diary,
I've been selling newspapers for so long, you'd think I knew all about them. But thanks to Prof. Edgewise and a certain crook, I learned there was something that could be done with papers besides reading them and wrapping things up in them!
Freddy Freeman

Mac Raboy wasn't still around. It was a script that cried for realism.

THE "NEW LOOK" IN *SHAZAM* IS MORE OF AN ATTITUDE, THEN, THAN AN ACTUAL CHANGING OF THE CHARACTERS?

We'll probably use fewer of the more humorous characters. What Talky Tawny's place in the revamped **Shazam** will be, I'm not certain yet. We've brought back Billy and Mary's Uncle Ebenezer Batson, too.

JACK C. HARRIS IS THE CURRENT *SHAZAM* EDITOR. IS YOUR METHOD OF WORKING WITH HIM ANY DIFFERENT THAN YOUR METHODS OF WORKING WITH JULIE OR JOE ORLANDO?

Not as far as Joe goes. Julie was more apt to initiate plot ideas. With the others, I usually came up with the plot ideas myself, and they would perhaps suggest changes. In the case of Julie, since there was not one regular writer, but several of us, he would come up with an idea, and suddenly turn me, and say, "You're writing that story!" The ones I was more apt to come up with ideas for were the **Captain Marvel Junior** and **Mary Marvel** stories. In particular, "The Man With the Paper Armor" (Junior), which actually stems from a dream I had . . . I dreamed the story conference, only in my dream, it was a **Captain Marvel** story. In the actual story it was **Junior,** because when I woke up, I realized **Junior** was a better character to be involved with newspapers.

WHAT'S THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE "NEW LOOK" IN *SHAZAM*?

I suppose that it needed to be selling a little better. Since today, we have generally more realistic characters, they decided to go in that direction. The odd part is, that the decision was made **after** I had scripted the first "New Look" story, the Captain 'Nazi story. It was a story I'd wanted to do for some time, and the only change we'd decided to make at that time was to get them off the road, since the TV series was over. I'd written the whole thing, then Jack Harris called me in, and told me that they wanted to get some real emotion into the next one I wrote. I told him I already had it in the one he had, because he hadn't gotten around to reading it yet. It turned out, I'd written exactly what they had decided they were going to do. We'll be bringing in some of the more brutal and meanacing villains, and I imagine, a few new ones. The series is going to **World's Finest,** where we have two less pages to work with, but we should be able to do it. Hopefully, we'll get back into our own magazine, maybe even get a back-up of Junior or Mary. **Shazam** had not been selling quite as well as it should, but they certainly did not want to kill off the feature, for several reasons, so it was decided to put it in **World's Finest.**

YOUR JOB IS TO SCRIPT MORE SERIOUS STORIES, BUT TO MAINTAIN THE CHARM AND INTEGRITY THE CHARACTERS HAD IN THE OLD DAYS?

Absolutely. I've spoken to lots of the people involved with **Captain Marvel** in the old days, and the one thing they all said was that they had **fun.** And that, I think, is the secret.

ARE YOU HAVING FUN?

I am having immense fun. I've never enjoyed myself more.

A FAWCETT MAGAZINE
NO. 1
MARY MARVEL COMICS
DEC.
10¢
FOLKS, MEET MARY MARVEL MY SISTER, WHO WILL APPEAR IN HER OWN MAGAZINE EVERY MONTH! HOPE YOU LIKE HER!
CAPT. MARVEL

by Thomas A. Tuna

Back in the Golden Age of Comics, there were very few female super do-gooders who could really get the job done . . . or sell comics (two attributes which, when placed under close scrutiny, are one and the same). And of these halcyon heroines, one stands out as a living tribute to super-human ability coupled with the wholesome goodness of mom's apple pie: **Mary Marvel,** Billy Batson's long-lost twin sister.

Mary Marvel and **Wonder Woman** were the outstanding feminine furies of the great early years of comics, but Billy's pretty sibling won over many hearts with her sweet-as-honey attitude. Mary swept into comicdom through the cherished pages of **CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES** soon after the successful debut of **Captain Marvel Jr.**

After proving herself as a top attraction in **CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES,** Mary moved her act to **WOW COMICS,** pleasing everyone but the red-garbed **Mr. Scarlet** . . . the hero Mary supplanted as **WOW's** big gun. To the credit of both stars, though, they remained close friends, and **Pinky, Mr. Scarlet's** young companion, even co-starred in **MARY MARVEL** #9. Throughout Mary's tenure with **WOW,** as well as 28 issues of her own magazine and all 89 **MARVEL FAMILY** issues, the Shazam Girl flashed through adventure after adventure in her lightning bolt-emblazoned red dress and snow-white cape.

It all began for Mary when she met Billy Batson on the Mental Marvel Quiz Show at radio station WHIZ. She was Mary **Bromfield,** then, adopted daughter of the

wealthy Bromfield family. Soon after that meeting Billy learned (from his former nurse, Sarah Primm) that he had a twin sister. The nurse gave Billy half of a locket, telling him that his long-lost sister possessed the matching half. Following up on a hunch, Billy showed his locket section to Mary, who (surprise!) had the missing half. Upon learning Billy's secret identity as the Big Red Cheese, Mary speculated on potential powers of her own. The young Mr. Batson put a quick damper on her enthusiasm, though. He refused to believe that the ancient wizard, **Shazam,** would bestow miraculous powers on a 'mere' girl! Well, to err is human, Billy . . .

Needless to say, Mary Batson gave the **"Shazam"** shout a try and, amid smoke and great clamor, the World's Mightiest Girl was born, with **Captain Marvel** himself christening her **Mary Marvel!** Instead of the more familiar battle cry of the Captain, though, Mary's **"Shazam"** represented a feminine collection: the grace of **Selena,** the strength of **Hippolyta,** the skill of **Ariadne,** the speed of **Zephyrus,** the beauty of **Aurora,** and the wisdom of **Minerva.**

But before we get into the complexities and contradictions of that sextet of myths and goddesses, a short side-trip back to look at the **Marvel Family** is in order. As I mentioned earlier, **Captain Marvel Jr.** preceeded Mary as a member of the power-laden clan. Freddy Freeman, Jr.'s secret identity was no relation to Mary, or her brother Billy. Then, of course, came the three **Lieutenants Marvel, Uncle Marvel, Freckles Marvel** (a young girlfriend of Mary), and even a non-super **Baby Marvel** (complete with diapers of red and gold) in one story. But enough of Mary's unique family. I think you get the idea.

Mary herself is another matter altogether. I've already told you about the six 'goddesses' from whom Mary's powers originate, right? Well, it just so happens that this writer was privy to one of the most remarkable conversations in the annals of illustrated fantasy . . . a friendly chat between Mary Marvel and (you guessed it!) Selena, Hippolyta, and company!

Following Mary Batson at a discreet distance one day, hoping for material for a "Day in the Life of . . ." piece, I was on hand when she stopped, called out Shazam's name, and . . . POOF . . . instant costume. Plus an added surprise: the sudden appearance of six of mythology's finest! Mary wasted no time questioning her unannounced guests . . .

MARY: HOLY MOLEY! Where did YOU come from?
SELENA: You called us forth, Mary. We are your "SHAZAM."
MARY: You're my "SHAZAM?" That's impossible! Shazam is a kindly, old wizard with a long, white beard and . . .
HIPPOLYTA: You misunderstand, young one. We six are those who Shazam destined to empower and protect you in your dangerous quests. I am **Hippolyta,** the queen of the legendary Amazons.
MARY: Hippolyta? Shazam gave me your **strength!** You're all really here! Holy Moley! Hippolyta, do you think you could introduce me to the rest of my Shaz . . . er, I mean YOUR friends?
HIPPOLYTA: It is your right, Mary. She who first spoke to you is **Selena,** also known as **Luna.**
SELENA: The Moon Goddess greets you, Mary Marvel.
HIPPOLYTA: Beside **Selena** stands the courageous princess of Crete, **Ariadne.**
ARIADNE: I bring you greetings from the islands, Mary.
HIPPOLYTA: Zephyrus is the next of my comrades, Mary. He who is the West Wind has graciously taken human form with which to communicate with you.
MARY: HE? Don't you mean **SHE?**
ZEPHYRUS: No, **MARY MARVEL.** I am **Favonius,** the spirit of the West Wind. And I am not female.
MARY: Gee! How could ol' Shazam make a mistake like that?
HIPPOLYTA: My final two fellow travelers still await, Mary. The beautiful **Aurora** and the goddess of wisdom who is known as **Minerva.**

AURORA: The sister of Helios bids you well, Mary Marvel.
MINERVA: As does the favored daughter of the Lord Zeus.

HIPPOLYTA: Well, Mary, now that you have met us all, what is it you require?
MARY: Wait a minute, PLEASE! Everything's moving too quickly for me! I don't really need anything, but . . . but there is something you could do for me. If it isn't too much trouble, that is.
MINERVA: Name your request, Mary.

MARY: I'd love to know more about all of you. Are all the stories I heard about you true? Why did Shazam give me YOUR powers? How did . . .
SELENA: Be patient, Mary. If it is a tale from each of us you desire, you shall have it.
MARY: Great! The only other 'god' I ever met was Mercury(NOTE: back in **MARY MARVEL** #25) when he came to earth to have his winged shoes repaired! And he was as nice as all of you are.
SELENA: I'm glad we please you, Mary. With your indulgence, I would like to be the first storyteller as my tale is less heroic than the others.
HIPPOLYTA: Why do you speak thus, sister?
SELENA: Because it is true. Mary, you have acquired the **grace** of Selena, the goddess of the Moon. Use it well, even as I did when I fell in love with the most beautiful of mortal men, Endymion.
MARY: That was beautiful, Selena.
HIPPOLYTA: Aye. A simple tale which will be difficult to follow. Never forget, Mary, that 'tis the grace of the Moon Goddess which allows you to retain your basic kindness. A gift which, at times, means more than mere brute strength.
SELENA: But what of your story, O Queen?
HIPPOLYTA: My story is one of battles, much like the ones Mary has fought. I have met the man-god Hercules in combat as well as the great warrior, Theseus. And I have survived to tell of both. But the tale of Theseus is best left to the lips of Ariadne, Mary.
MARY: Ariadne, Shazam told me that my 'spirit of skill' comes from you. Do you think your story can explain that to me?
ARIADNE: That I do not know, Mary, but my narrative proves interesting nonetheless. And yes, Hippolyta, Theseus, The Athenian king, has his story closely woven with mine own. Perhaps my reputation for skill, such as it is, stems from our victory over the dreaded Minotaur.
MARY: You helped defeat the MINOTAUR?! Wasn't that the half-bull, half-man, all-mean creature?
ARIADNE: Yes. But it wasn't long after that struggle that I was to lose Theseus forever. And it is Minerva who must take credit for our separation.
MINERVA: What I did, Ariadne, I did for the good all involved.
ARIADNE: Minerva realizes that she was a willing partner in the plan of the god Dionysus to win my attentions. She knows that she used her influence as the patron goddess of Theseus' home city of Athens, to convice him to leave me behind on the island of Naxos.
MINERVA: But you forget, fair princess, how well the god Dionysus treated you after your precious mortal left. Do you know how Ariadne was honored, Mary?
MARY: Well . . . no. But if you'd like to tell me . . .
MINERVA: I WILL tell you! Dionysus made her vitually immortal by gracing her with a crown of gold and rare gems, and then flinging it into the heavens where it appears as a constellation to this day!
MARY: Minerva. You bestowed upon me your **wisdom.** Were you really born, full-grown, from the head of Zeus?
MINERVA: That is the manner in which Father Zeus chose to bring me into being, Mary. I sprang fully grown, with my shield and bronze helmet, from the All-Father's great skull and, as thus, am the favorite child of the Ruler of the Sky. So close am I to Zeus that he entrusted to my care his invincible thunderbolt, the image of which I placed on your colorful attire.

MARY: Holy Moley! You mean the lightning bolt on my costume is just like the thunderbolt of Zeus? Imagine!

MINERVA: I touched your adventurous career in another way as well, although indirectly. Untold eons ago, I invented the musical instrument known as the flute, the same flute which became the Magic Flute of the Pied Piper of earth legend.

MARY: The flute found by Joshua Joak, the man who caused so much commotion in Marveltown by accidentally leading forest animals through the village streets? (NOTE: in **MARY MARVEL** #14)

MINERVA: Yes, Mary. I was happy to see you handle that situation as well as you did. But enough of me. Why not hear the story of the most puzzling of us all: Zephyrus?

MARY: I almost forget! She's . . . I mean HE's the only one here who isn't a girl!

ZEPHYRUS: That is true, Mary, but you possess my **fleetness** despite that fact. As for my story, I am one of the Sky Gods who serve Aeolus, the King of the Winds here on earth. With my brothers, Boreas the North Wind, Notus the South Wind, and Eurus the East Wind, I call the isle of Aeolis my home. She who bore me is present here as well, Mary.

MARY: Your MOTHER? But the only one who hasn't spoken yet is . . .

AURORA: Aurora? Yes, Mary. I, Aurora, also called Eos, the Goddess of the Dawn, brought Zephyrus into the world.

MARY: Holy Moley! Shazam was right when he picked you as the model of beauty!

ZEPHYRUS: Such is the loveliness of my mother that upon hearing of the death of my half-brother Memnon, she cried tears in the form of dew. And such is her compassion that she created the first grasshopper.

MARY: What does compassion have to do with a grasshopper?

AURORA: Zephyrus' reasoning is sound enough, Mary. I fell in love with the mortal Tithonus, and asked the all-wise Zeus to make him immortal so we could be married. But I neglected to ask that he be made eternally youthful. My husband, though he could never die, became wizened and shrivelled through the years. To ease his sufferings, I altered Tithonus into the first of the common grasshoppers.

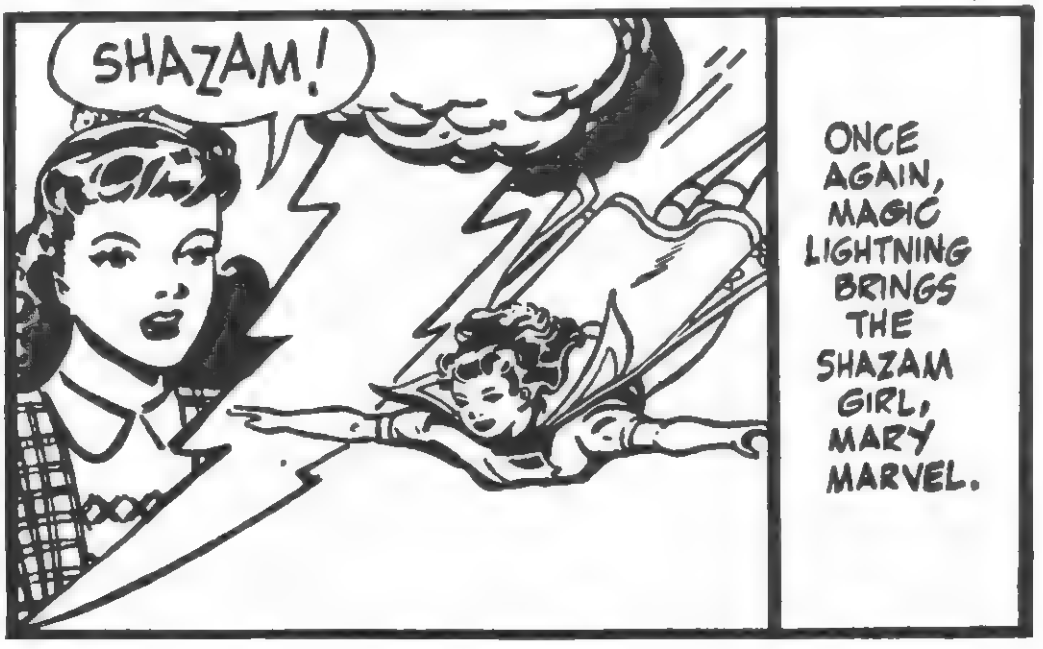
SELENA: So you see, Mary, we six are close in many respects, tied beyond any untying in others. Perhaps this is why the ancient Egyptian who called himself Shazam chose us to serve you with our powers.

MARY: Do you think you could stay around a little bit longer? There are some people I know who would love to . . .

SELENA: I'm sorry, Mary, but the time has come to take our leave. We must return to the mists of time and legend. If it is permitted . . . who can tell? Perhaps we will return one day.

No sooner were the words out of the mouth of the so-called Moon Goddess than the curious collection of anachronisms vanished from sight, leaving behind them the World's Mightiest (and Most Confused) Girl.

"Freckles will never believe me when I tell her . . . NEVER!", Mary whispered as she zoomed off in the general direction of Marveltown.



WITH ONE MAGIC PENCIL...

SCHAFFENBERGER!

STEPFATHER OF THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL

By Mike W. Barr and Jack C. Harris

"There were plenty of other characters who were closer copies of **Superman** than **Captain Marvel,"** says artist Kurt Schaffenberger, recalling the historic **Superman** Vs. **Captain Marvel** lawsuit, "but he was the only one who was outselling the Man of Steel. And I always felt **Cap** was a better character. **Superman** was always so damn serious . . ."

And on goes the defense of **Captain Marvel** by the man who could very well be considered the Big Red Cheese's stepfather. While E. Nelson Bridwell strives to script stories like those which made Cap and Company the magically successful strip it was in the Forties, Kurt, as inker of the feature, tries to give the art the same enchantment. He and Nelson are two of the only people who know and recall that the design on the back of Cap's cape is done only on the left side—and that the bottom flower shape extends over the stripe ever so slightly.

Yes, **Captain Marvel** is alive and well in the Seventies, and heading for the Eighties, but such was not always the case. He's had more than his share of hard times. However, his artistic mentor, Kurt Schaffenberger, is more fortunate. Though closely associated with the **Marvel Family,** Kurt's career has spanned almost forty years, and his talented pencil has lent life to almost every company in the business. His work on the **Superman Family** of characters is world-famous (in the world of comics), but his first professional comics work was for the Fawcett line of comics. He is, in fact, the one artist who has helped to illustrate the Cheese's adventures in the Forties, the Fifties, the Sixties (yes, the Sixties—more about that later), and the Seventies. And he keeps a watchful eye (and brush) over his red-clad stepson to this day.

"Stepson" did we say? Certainly. For while Kurt Schaffenberger had no part in the conception or creation of **Captain Marvel** (artist C.C. Beck and writer Bill Parker take those honors), Kurt has certainly expended as much talent and love on cap as if the Big Red Cheese was his own child.

Kurt graduated from Pratt Institute of Brooklyn in 1941, and, portfolio in hand, began pounding the pavement of the Big Apple in search of work.

"Pratt had a placement service," recalls Kurt, "and they sent me out to a number of places; a place that dealt in fabric design, which was totally out of my realm of interest. They sent me out to a Bamberger's in Newark, N.J., but that didn't work out either.

"But then I was sent out to Jack

Binder's (brother of Otto) studio, which initially was in his home, but later was moved to the top floor of a converted barn out back."

At the time Kurt joined the Binder staff, **Captain Marvel** was already two years old, and doing quite well. With the aid of his staff, Binder was packaging many of the Fawcett titles, including **IBIS** and **BULLETMAN.** Each man had a specific job on each feature: penciling, inking, figures, secondary figures, backgrounds, and so on. Kurt began on the backgrounds.

"I wasn't a 'fan' of the comics in those days. In fact, when I was sent on the assignment, I didn't know what comics were all about. I had seen them, but back then, most of the ones I saw were reprints of newspaper strips. When I learned that they were doing whole new stories for the books, it was news to me.

"At first I thought it was 'just a job', little realizing that I'd be sticking with it for close to forty years!"

But Kurt's stint with the Binder studio was only a short beginning to that career. Almost exactly one year after Kurt heard the call of Jack Binder, he heard the call of Uncle Sam, and entered the U.S. Army for three and a half years, including becoming a translator for the O.S.S.

"After the war I went right back to working for Jack. It was the one thing I had been doing before the war that was familiar to me. And that was when I really began to get into the **Captain Marvel** thing.

"The original gang at the studio had all disbanded when the war broke out, but Jack and C.C. Beck were now in partnership in Englewood, N.J., and I immediately began working there. But after a week or so, I said to myself, 'why am I working here'?, and I decided to go freelance.

"One of the other original members of the Binder crew, Wendell Crowley, was now an editor at Fawcett, so I went there and got some work from him.

"I started doing the **Ibis the Invincible** strip, and gradually they got me into doing the **Captain Marvel** stuff. I did **Captain Marvel Junior** first, and I was helping Jack out on **Mary Marvel.**

"At the end, I was doing all the **Marvel Family.** When the Fawcett comics line folded, I was the artist at the time."

Kurt is of the opinion that Fawcett cancelled their comics, not because of any suit brought on by **Superman,** but because of the general decline of super-heroes at the time (1953). At the time, Kurt believed the era for **Captain Marvel** had passed. The world was growing up, and there just wasn't a place for the light-hearted fantasy of the **Marvel Family.** Perhaps he was right.

"For about four years after my time at Fawcett, I did stuff for the American Comics Group (in the Sixties, Kurt would create the characters **Magicman** and **Nemesis** for that company), and Stan Lee's outfit, and whoever had a job. Some was general artwork for posters, package design, whatever came into the office. There was quite a gap between the time I was doing **Captain Marvel**

SUPERMAN'S GIRL FRIEND
LOIS LANE
GOODNESS! IF I WANT SUPERMAN TO FIND ME IRRESISTIBLE, ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS RUB THIS MONKEY'S PAW...MAKE A WISH...AND IT'LL COME TRUE! HMM..I CAN JUST IMAGINE IT...
GET OFF THE EARTH! GO BACK TO YOUR OWN PLANETS! I LOVE LOIS...AND NO ALIEN SUPERMAN WILL MARRY HER IF I CAN HELP IT! SHE'S MINE...AND I INTEND TO MARRY HER RIGHT AWAY.
IF LOIS LANE HAD THREE WISHES, WHAT WOULD SHE WISH FOR? IMMORTALITY? RICHES? POWER? OF COURSE NOT! FIRST AND LAST, SHE'D WISH FOR HAPPINESS WITH SUPERMAN! BUT FATE HAS A SURPRISE IN STORE FOR LOIS WHEN SHE GAINS POSSESSION OF THAT MAGICAL TALISMAN--
THE MONKEY'S PAW!
YOU SHOULDN'T HANDLE YOUR RIVALS SO ROUGHLY, SUPERMAN...BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR MAD DESIRE TO HAVE ME ALL TO YOURSELF...
Schaffenberger

and the time I started doing the **Superman Family.**

"The same was not true of Otto Binder. He was the writer of most of the stories I had drawn for Fawcett, and when they folded, he moved right over to DC—immediately! He was friends with Mort Weisinger (then-**SUPERMAN** editor) and he was directly responsible for me coming over in 1957.

"At the time, they were doing a **LOIS LANE** book as a spin off of **SUPERMAN** and during a conversation with Mort, Otto brought up my name. At the time, I was on vacation with my family up in Maine, and I got a call from Otto telling me he'd recommended me to Mort for this new **LOIS LANE** book. Well, I immediately called Mort from Maine, and he told me to work up some samples and get down and show them to him right away!"

The rest is comics history. Kurt received the **LOIS LANE** assignment with issue #1, and he soon gained the reputation of **THE Lois Lane** artist. Did anyone remember **Captain Marvel** by this time?

Kurt Schaffenberger did, and snuck **Cap** into at least one **Lois** story, "The Monkey's Paw", from **L.L.** #42, (July, 1963). In the splash to this story, **Captain Marvel,** along with many other heroes, is being beaten up by **Superman.** Later, in "Lois Lane, Super-Telepath" **(L.L.** #56, April, 1965), a gang had a hideout in an abandoned subway tunnel. Upon reading the script, Kurt suggested he might decorate the tunnel with statues of the Seven Deadly Enemies of Man. However, he resisted this temptation.

Later, when 1972 rolled around, and the DC revival of **Captain Marvel** and company was planned, Kurt waited with keen interest.

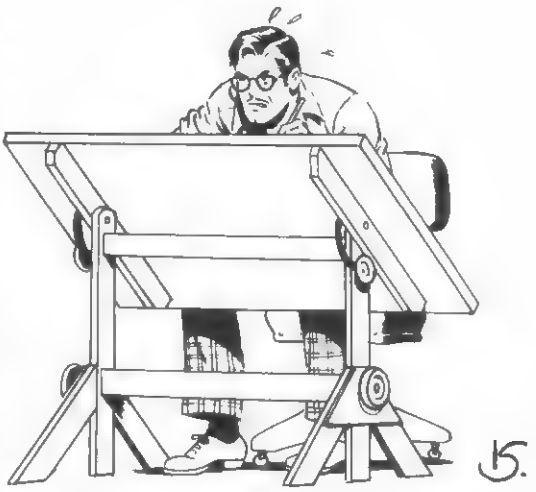
"I always felt that **Captain Marvel** was a better character than **Superman,"** he confesses. "It was because of the way he was handled." Here the dapper, mustachioed man pauses, and shrugs, repeating his major argument. **"Superman** was always so damn serious . . ."

Kurt with his daughter, circa 1948.

Kurt received his first chance at the revived **Captain Marvel** in issue #11 of **SHAZAM!,** and with issue #14, after head artist C.C. Beck dropped the strip, he became the regular artist on the book, until Don Newton was assigned the pencilling chores, to give it a more realistic look. Confirmed Cap fans need not worry, though, because Kurt Schaffenberger is the inker of the feature, and sees that the strip keeps one foot firmly entrenched in the fantasy so necessary to the **SHAZAM!** universe.

E. Nelson Bridwell is quite happy about Kurt's strong feelings for the character. Nelson (who is definitely in the running for **Captain Marvel's** other stepfather) says, in his introduction to the Harmony Books volume **"SHAZAM! From the 40's to the 70's":** "I hope I have captured the spirit . . . of **Captain Marvel.** I know the art does—for we have Kurt Schaffenberger . . ."

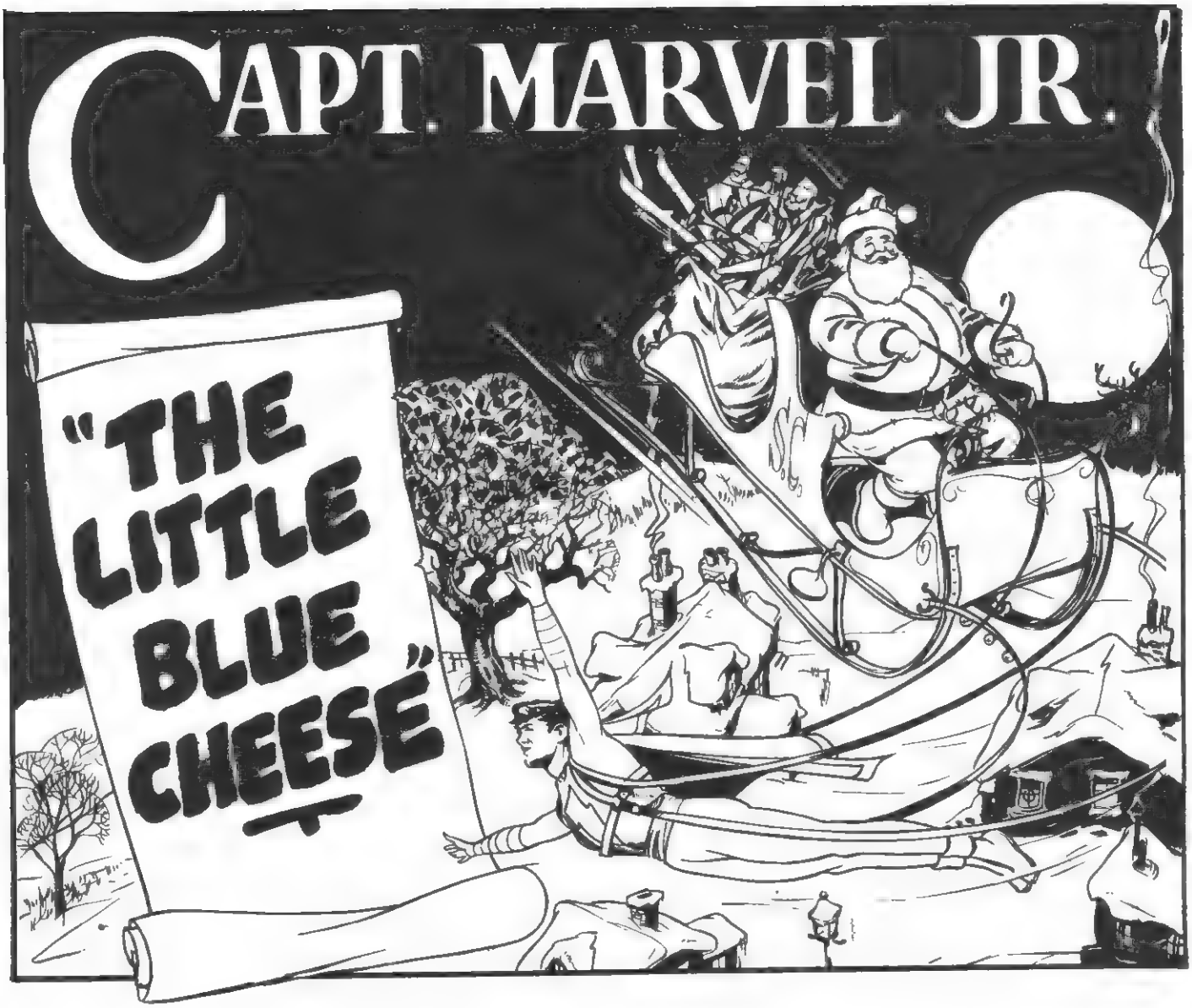
Hundreds of thousands of **Captain Marvel** fans, also ranging from the 1940's to the 1970's agree with Nelson, and couldn't be happier.



JACK BINDER STUDIO
ENGLEWOOD, N.J.

A DUCA - 1941
Schaffenberger '78

CAPT. MARVEL JR.



BY
LARRY HERNDON
&
LYNN WOOLEY

He was a "teen titan" more than twenty years before the term was ever coined. He could fly faster than a speeding bullet, leap tall buildings in a single bound, and didn't need a phonebooth in which to change identities. He was the first teen-aged superhero to have his own strip, and his adventures were published longer than any other (Golden Age) teen-aged crimebuster.

His name was Freddy Freeman, but when the time for action came, he was known to friend and foe alike as **Captain Marvel Jr.**

Most of the super heroes of the Golden Age were indirect products of the second World War. In the case of **Captain Marvel Jr., we'd be pretty safe in saying that he was a direct** product of that global conflict. The origin began in **Master Comics** #21, where a Hitler-inspired master villain by the name of Captain Nazi had been playing havoc with Fawcett's two big stars, **Captain Marvel** and **Bulletman,** in one of the wildest epic adventures of the war years. It was a three-parter: Captain Nazi had already battled **Bulletman** to a virtual draw in the first story, and now was slugging it out with **Captain Marvel** in the pages of **WhizComics.** It was a real knock-down drag out battle and the scene was in an airplane high above above a sheltered ocean bay. The Big Red Cheese knocked the super-powered Nazi out of the aircraft and sent him plunging into the briney waters below. As luck would have it, young Freddy Freeman and his grandfather were fishing out in the bay and, seeing a figure come splashing into the water, their first response was to pull the man into the boat to save his life. They didn't know who the man was, but they soon learned, for their kindness was immediately repaid with violence.

Captain Nazi ruthlessly threw both of his rescuers out of the boat, and then scrammed. The old man

drowned, but **Captain Marvel** got to the injured boy in time to save him from a watery death. It appeared to be all in vain, however, since doctors at the hospital were not optimistic about Freddy's chances. Indeed, they gave the injured lad only a few hours to live.

Captain Marvel, though, would not give so easily. As Billy Batson, he took young Freddy deep into the subway tunnel that also served as a secret headquarters for the ancient wizard Shazam, the source of his own awesome powers.

The old wizard was sympathetic, but said he could not change what had already come to pass. There **was** a way to save Freddy's life, however. If **Captain Marvel** would be willing to pass along a portion of his tremendous powers to the youngster, then Freddy Freeman could continue to live.

Billy Batson readily agreed, and the ensuing conversation is comics history:

> Old Shazam: "Billy Batson . . . speak my name!"
>
> Billy: "Shazam!" (The magic lightning strikes, and the old wizard vanishes.)
>
> Freddy: "Why, it—it's Captain Marvel!"

At this point, a **second** lightning appeared, this time over the head of the startled Freddy Freeman. Magically, in place of the dying youngster stood a handsome, steel-bodied youth of about fourteen. He looked in many ways like **Captain Marvel,** except the colors of his uniform were different. The basic color was blue, the cape was red, and the belt and the trim were yellow. The hair was blue-black and slightly shaggy.

"I'm all well, again!" he cried. "I'm strong! I'm like you!"

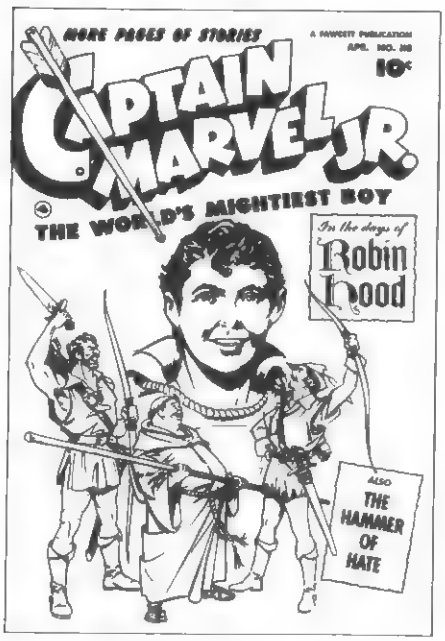
"That's right," responded the Captain, "You're Captain Marvel Jr.!"

That's the origin on paper, as presented in the pages of **Whiz Comics** #25. The master villain, Captain Nazi, had caused the creation of a new teen-aged hero who would prove to be an awesome nemesis for the forces of tyranny and evil the world over.

Captain Marvel Jr.'s behind-the-scenes origin, while not as exciting, is certainly every bit as interesting. The editors at Fawcett Publications knew they had a great thing on their hands with **Captain Marvel.** Copies of his own title, as well as **Whiz Comics** (where the Big Red Cheese was cover featured), were selling like the proverbial hotcakes. According to the late Otto Binder (**the** writer when you mention Fawcett's heroes), the volume of fan mail that **Captain Marvel** was pulling in from excited readers was incredible. Binder was a veteran pulp author and had experienced the satisfaction of favorable mail before, but the sheer amount pouring in for their red-clad crimebuster had the Fawcett staff shaking their heads in total amazement. In a word, **Captain Marvel** was a **smash.**

With that kind of sales appeal, then, it obviously made good business sense to attempt to duplicate the formula. Fawcett editor Ed Herron brainstormed the new character, who was to be, quite literally, a junior version of **Captain Marvel.** To assure success, the new strip had to have a good artist . . . the **right** artist . . . to bring it to life, and Herron selected Emanuel "Mac" Raboy for the assignment. It was a brilliant choice.

Raboy's work was fine-lined, precise, and uncluttered. Quite often, his beautiful drawings looked more like poster art than comic



book panels. Let's conjure up the image.

Picture a lithe, superhuman boy, drifting and floating high above skyscrapers and city smog. The figure is **not** a muscled lump of super-hero flesh, but rather a youth of normal, even meager, physique. The character's outlines are precisely delineated, and the proportions, though small, are perfect. There's no cartoony image here . . . **that's** reserved for the Senior Captain. This image, rather, is real-life and each panel, as we mentioned, is almost a work of poster-art in itself.

This portrayal is **Captain Marvel Jr.** as he's best remembered . . . as he flowed from the pen of Mac Raboy, a staple in the Fawcett bullpen for years. **Junior** was to have a number of other illustrators over the years—notable among them being Joe Certa, Kurt Schaffenberger, and Bud Thompson—but Raboy is the name most often associated with the character.

Raboy was born in New York City in 1914. His parents, Sarah and Isaac Raboy, saw that their only child got a good education and, after the young man had graduated from De Witt Clinton High School, he enrolled in a WPA (Works Progress Administration) drawing class to further develop his budding artistic talents. He matured quickly as an artist and soon found himself doing odd jobs in the commercial art field. By this time, however, Raboy had a wife to support, and needed a steady income. He found it in the booming comics industry.

Like untold dozens of other Golden Age artists, Mac Raboy started out in the comic shop of Harry "A" Chesler. His realistic style, (patterned after his idol, Alex Raymond), made him a standout in the shop, and he toiled on such assignments as **Mr. Scarlet, Ibis the Invincible, Bulletman,** and other strips Chesler was producing for Fawcett Comics.

Editor Herron liked Raboy's work, and requested that the young artist be assigned to draw **Captain Marvel Jr.** on a regular basis. And draw it he did, turning out some of the best illustrated stories in the history of the genre. His covers were especially great and any one of them done during the war years could have been used as a recruiting poster for the U.S. Armed Forces, pushing patriotism and victory over the the Axis.

Raboy continued with **Captain Marvel Jr.** through a barrage of stories, and his style became a standard for the character . . . a style that numerous other artists to

render the hero would copy . . . even to the 1970's when **Junior** would fight evil under the DC banner, and artists like Dave Cocrum would handle the pen and ink work. (Raboy even made a "how to draw **Captain Marvel Jr.**" poster for the otherartiststo go by.)

Mac Raboy's tenure on **Captain Marvel Jr.** was not without its stormy times, which, concidentally usually blew in around deadline time. His pages often contained less actual drawing than others, because he sometime drew them **smaller** than other artists. Even so, he had trouble turning in a story on time. Eventually, Raboy acquired a number of assistants, including Gene McDonald and Ruby Zuboff, but **still** the dreaded deadline problems continued to exist, driving him to chain-smoking and insecurity. In 1944, Raboy finally left the **Marvels** to work on the **Green Lama** comic strip for Spark Publications, an assignment that lasted a couple of years. Then, in 1948, one of Raboy's dreams came true: he closed a deal with King Features to draw the **Flash Gordon** Sunday page. As mentioned, Flash's creator, the late Alex Raymond had been Raboy's idol and chief influence since the beginning of his career, and to draw Raymond's strip was the ultimate for Raboy. Raboy was just one of many to study Raymond's elegant figures, but was one of a select **few**

to successfully capture that elegance in his own work.

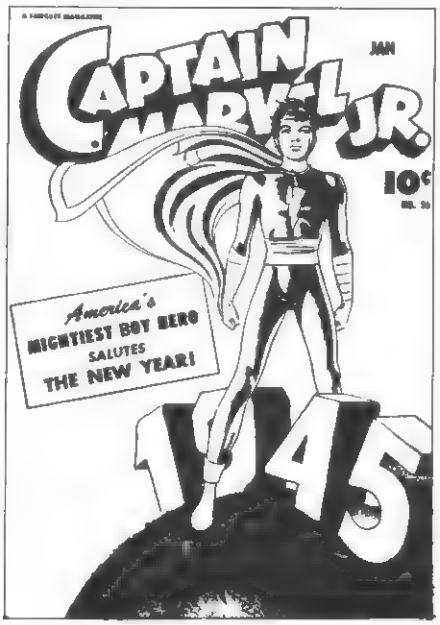
Mac Raboy died in December of 1967 after twenty-five years in the comics field. Without a doubt, **Captain Marvel Jr.** stands as his greatest achievement, a perfect blend of the right artist with the right character.

The final "man" behind **Captain Marvel Jr.** was **Captain Marvel** himself. No, the big Big Red Cheese never took a pencil to the bristol board to draw his young counterpart's adventures, but **still** the Senior Captain was as responsible as anyone for **Junior's** success. After all, Freddy Freeman owed his very existence to **Captain Marvel,** in reality as well as in fiction. Just as Freddy Freeman took his powers from the Captain, he also took his sales figures. **Some** differences were thrown in so the reader could tell the characters apart . . . otherwise the two were basically alike. The most notable difference was the characters' ages. The Big Red Cheese was, of course, a young boy in his other identity of Billy Batson; the magic lightning transformed him into an adult. However, since **one** adult **Marvel** was quite enough for sales purposes, Freddy Freeman's lightning bolt didn't alter his age: he remained a teen-ager. The only other major difference was in their lifestyles. Billy Batson had a prestigious job as a world-famous newscaster at radio station W-H-I-Z, (later to add television) while on the other hand, Freddy was a (relatively) poor newsboy eking out a living by peddling his papers for nickels and dimes.

Still, he did okay.

The Little Blue Cheese shared the cover spot with **Bulletman** on **Master Comics** #22, where the epic battle with Captain Nazi continued, but by the very next issue, when his own strip began, **Junior** had the cover spotlight all to himself. He was the big new star in **Master Comics** and everyone knew it. In fact, the blue-clad teen-ager appeared on the cover for the rest of that title's run; **Master Comics** folded in December, 1953 with issue #133. He was top dog during the time, having 112 stories printed in **Master Comics'** pages. And, naturally, he had his own book too —it began with the November, 1942 issue, and hit the stands 119 times. Additionally, he was teamed up with **Captain Marvel** and **Mary Marvel** (the female counterpart in the Shazam-inspired universe) in a book entitled, appropriately enough, **THE MARVEL FAMILY.** It ran 89 issues and the early ones also featured the three characters in individual stories, as well as in their teamup adventures.

As you can see, **Captain Marvel Jr.** was a **busy** hero.



And he tangled with some pretty interesting villains, too. Chief among them, of course, was Captain Nazi. Garbed in a magnificent green military uniform with crimson gloves, boots and belt, and with a bright swastika emblazoned on his chest, he made a splendid bad guy. He and **Captain Marvel Jr.** tangled a number of times during the years, and the boy-in-blue always managed to just barely vanquish the arch-foe . . . but the readers knew he'd pop up again, some day . . .

Another colorful heavy who plagued Junior was the mad Mongol monster, an armor-clad giant who stood thirty feet tall if he was an inch! He and the youthful crimebuster slugged it out in the early 1950's and each encounter was a titanic battle. In one issue of **Master Comics,** the giant was aided by a huge weapon he'd built called "the Hammer of Hate." It was this gigantic, spiked hammer on wheels, you see, and . . . well, you'd have to see it in action to really appreciate it. As powerful as Junior was, even **he** had trouble with this massive war machine and its malvolent master!

Other memorable villains who crossed paths with **Captain Marvel Jr.** included The Panther Man, Dr. Eternity, (Master of the Wax Death), Captain Nippon (Japan's answer to Captain Nazi, don't you see?), Mr. Macabre, Dr. Satano, Xerxes Quintus, and a host of others, including Sivana Jr. The more astute among you will immediately recognize the name Sivana . . . he was the "World's Wickedest Scientist" and co-incidentally was **Captain Marvel's** main arch-foe. It made **perfect** sense, then, for **Captain Marvel Junior** to tackle Sivana Jr., who was the "World's Wickedest Boy."

When he wasn't busy bashing crooks and/or saving the world from awful dooms, **Captain Marvel Jr.** reverted to his alter-ego of news-boy Freddy Freeman. Freddy still carried the results of that first get-together with with Captain Nazi —a crippled leg. The handicapped left leg was always shown bent-up with Freddy having to use a crutch to walk. It never seemed to present too much of a problem to the lad, however, especially since he only had to shout the name of his idol **(CAPTAIN MARVEL!)** to be transferred into a blue thunderbolt of raw power!

Like most other superheroes, **Captain Marvel Jr.** had a colorful cast of supporting characters—most of whom populated the neighborhood around Oak and Main where Freddy's newstand was located. First and foremost was Freddy's illustrious landlady, a motherly type named Mrs. Wagner. She owned the boarding house where Freddy roomed, giving him chance after chance to meet all types of sleazy characters who would stop off for the night from time to time. Mrs. Wagner spent her days cheerily working around the house, cleaning, washing, cooking her always delightful meals, and often figuring in the adventures of **Captain Marvel Jr.,** too.

Not far from Freddy's newsstand, there was a bank that the youth was known to visit occasionally. There, he'd run into a calm business type by the name of Davenport who ran the bank. He and other bank personnel provided the springboard for still more adventures.

After all, what's a comic strip without a bank to rob?

The bank had other protectors than the Junior Captain. In fact, just a hop, skip, and jump away stood a combination police and fire station. The friendly neighborhood fire fighter was Chief Bond, the typical red-faced blaze-battler. On the other side of the building was the always helpful policeman, Captain Cornell. Three other police officers figured in the strip now and then: Sergeant Stern who deplored criminals and wasn't so easy going as Cornell, Patrolman Potter, and Officer Jim Bellows.

Oh yes, a puppy dog also had quarters in the fire and police station.

And there were other continuing characters: a Chinese laundry attendant named Cholly, a drug store owner by the name of Pop, and a movie theatre was operated by Mr. Peesely.

Last, but not least, we should mention the strip's resident mad scientist, the cerebral, if slightly zany Professor Edgewise. His far out inventions more often than not involved **Captain Marvel Jr.** or Freddy Freeman in fantastic adventures, much as those of Professor Potter would do in the **Jimmy Olsen** strip years later.

These continuing characters and the familiar surrounding neighborhood gave the strip added continuity, a reference point for the readers, and added many plot possibilities.

The men behind the typewriters who used those plots on behalf of **Captain Marvel, Jr.** included Bill Woolfolk, Irving Schuffman, Bernie Miller, and others, as well as the previously mentioned Otto Binder. They all kept **Junior** busy, pitting him against everything from master villains to invading aliens to mad scientists to who-knows-what. The stories were generally very well written and remained fresh over the years. Like most super hero comics, **Captain Marvel Jr.'s** changed with time to better reflect those times. Starting out with themes that were usually centered predominately on World War II, the scripts later evolved through such phases as monsters, science-fiction, the Korean War, and so on, each representing a particular current war or event in the world. For example, if pitting **Junior** against Communist invaders in Korea in the early 1950's would sell more books (and it did), then that's what the scripts called for. Likewise, if the readers wanted monsters (as they did during comics horror cycles), then **Captain Marvel Jr.** obliged them. It was good business sense, and first and foremost, the people directing **Junior's** career at Fawcett were good businessmen.

As the late Otto Binder remarked in a letter on this subject in the mid-1960's, "It was a job, and a business thing, sure, but it was also a lot of fun writing for Junior and

EYE BELOW CENTER
SIDE VIEW OF FACE ROUGHLY A SQUARE
EAR BEHIND CENTER LOBE TIPPED FORWARD
BASE OF NOSE ABOUT HALF WAY BETWEEN EYE BROW and CHIN
NOSTRIL SET WELL BACK TO MEET CURVE OF CHEEK
HAIR PARTS ON RIGHT SIDE
FRONT VIEW OF FACE IS HEART SHAPED
HAIR SHOWS BEHIND NECK

the other Shazam strips. Most of the scripts were easy to write, since the characters were so well known to us. They almost seemed to write themselves. That was a good time for all of us, and I think it was reflected in our work.'"

Indeed it was, and it was a good time for the readers too. If one word had to be chosen to describe the Fawcett **Marvel Family,** it'd be FUN.

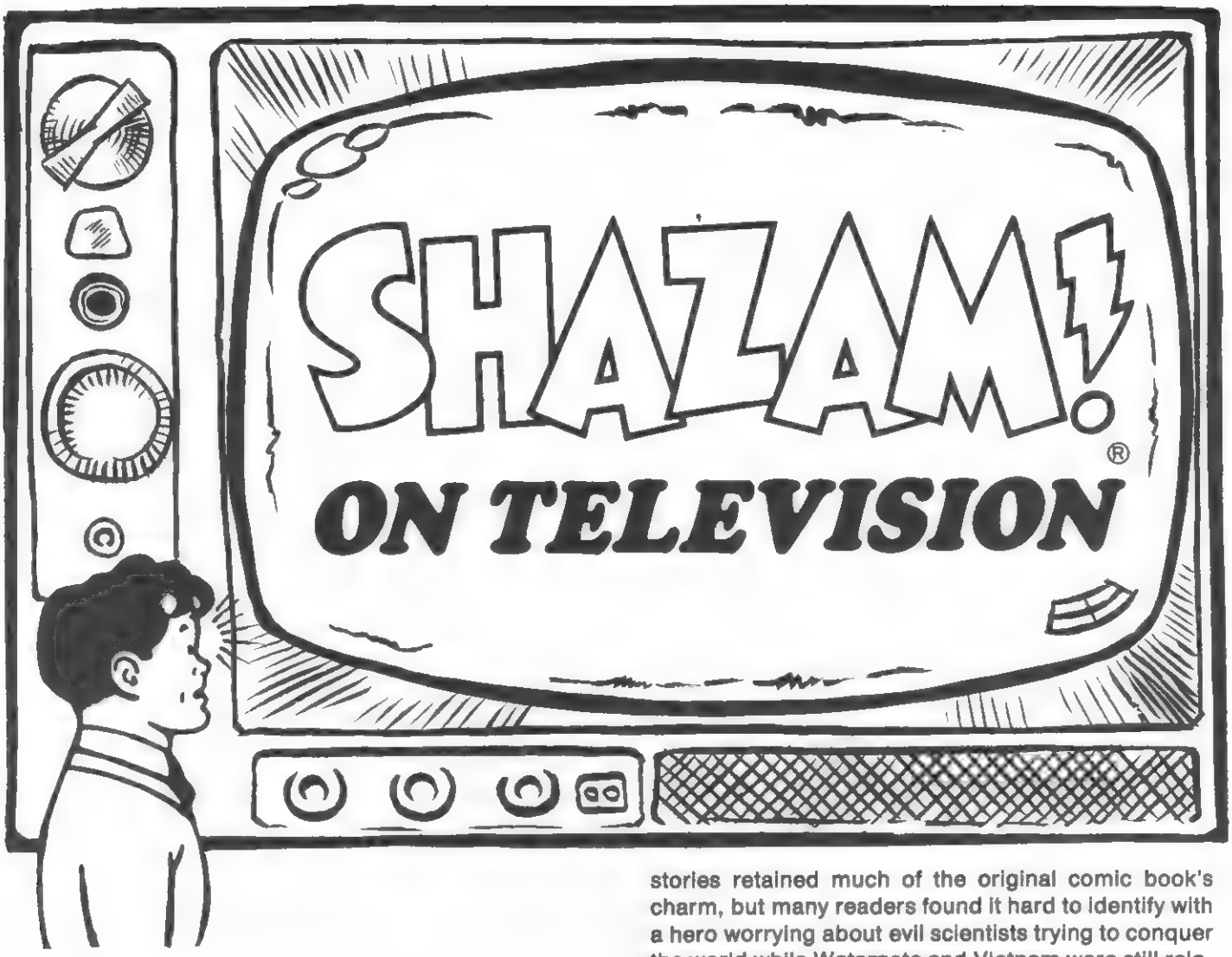
Captain Marvel Jr. isn't just a child of the 40's and 50's—he's also a staple of comics reading today. When Fandom rumbled in the mid-70's with the exciting news that The Big Red Cheese was soon to return, most fans couldn't help but wonder if The Little Blue Cheese would return with him. The waiting didn't last long, as **Junior** made his first appearance in the very first new adventure in **SHAZAM** #1, February, 1973. The story explained the star-studded return of the **Marvel Family,** as it fought the evil Sivanas. The adventure was written by Denny O'Neil with artwork by the legendary C.C. Beck.

Junior returned again in issue #9, in his first solo appearance of the new adventures. Written by Elliot S. Maggin, and illustrated by Dave Cockrum, the tale successfully recaptured the splendid Golden Age atmosphere of the Raboy era. Titled "The Mystery of the Missing Newsstand," the story also reintroduced a narrative technique that was quite popular in **Junior's** 1940's appearance: the diary. You see, Freddy Freeman used to start his stories off by writing in his diary, in effect letting the reader in on his personal thoughts, while sharing his adventures with us. Likewise, the stories were always closed with an epilogue panel (of diary) to wrap the story up.

The Marvel Family got together again in **Shazam** #11 to match brain and brawn with the Sivana Family in a tale entitled "The Year Without Christmas." **Junior** has made numerous other appearances since then, both in team-ups with his **SHAZAM**-partners, and in solo adventures. A number of artists have handled art chores on **Junior** in the 70's, including Dick Giordano, and one of **Junior's** original artists, Kurt Schaffenberger. Our favorite new story so far has been "The Man in the Paper Armor" written by E. Nelson Bridwell, who is perhaps the world's foremost **SHAZAM** authority.

So, we have **Captain Marvel Jr.,** a dynamic hero of the 40's, 50's, and now achieving new heights of success and popularity in the 1970's.

Next time you see a crippled newsboy at the corner of Oak and Main . . . don't blink—you might miss the lightning.



by JIM BURNS

Captain Marvel burst onto the comic book scene in the second issue of **WHIZ COMICS** (February, 1940). Published by Fawcett Comics, **Captain Marvel's** heroic innocence combined strength, courage, and wisdom. C.C. Beck, the comic's first artist, based Marvel's wholesome appearance on former matinee star Fred MacMurray.

Over the next twelve years, **Captain Marvel** enjoyed immense success in such comic books as **CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES, AMERICA'S GREATEST COMICS,** and **MARVEL FAMILY.** But in the early fifties, Fawcett decided to discontinue their comics line. DC Comics had earlier filed a suit accusing the company that **Captain Marvel** blatantly ripped-off **Superman.** Fawcett finally agreed that they could only publish future issues of **Captain Marvel** with DC's permission.

Captain Marvel's unique world of stylized fantasy remained stagnant for the next twenty years. In 1972, DC Comics revived the character themselves, under the title **Shazam!.** Ironically, the magazine's first issue featured **Superman** and **Captain Marvel** on the same cover.

Captain Marvel's innocuous exploits had a tough time fitting into the turbulent seventies. The new stories retained much of the original comic book's charm, but many readers found it hard to identify with a hero worrying about evil scientists trying to conquer the world while Watergate and Vietnam were still relevant issues.

Around the same time that **SHAZAM!** debuted, Filmation Associates (producers of the sixties' animated **Superman, Batman,** and **Aquaman** series), was trying to bring a new look to Saturday morning television. The company originally considered producing **SHAZAM!** as a cartoon, but then decided to film the show as live action adventure.

"In order to make live action work," said Norm Prescott, Filmation's chairman of the board, "we wanted a larger than life character that would give us an opportunity to use special effects and also attract the kids. Captain Marvel was the perfect example of a character who had been dormant and not overplayed or overexposed. We felt he was perfect."

Filmation dropped most of **SHAZAM!**'s fantasy elements. Billy Batson became a troubleshooter, travelling around the country in a van, helping problem youngsters. Accompanying Billy was Mentor, an ageless guardian. When Billy needed special advice, he would use a domed object with flashing lights to contact "The Elders"—the six gods who transferred their powers to **Captain Marvel** (Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, and Mercury). In dire emergencies, Billy could summon his 3,000 year old predecessor, Shazam.

To illustrate "The Elders," **SHAZAM!'S** creative director Don Christensen utilized conventional animation. "Basically, we went to the comic books as our source," says Christensen. "In the comics, you get a different artist working on various stories and invariably they come up with a little different concept than what was put down before. Every character we design goes through a number of processes. We come up with concepts for characters, we look at them, try different approaches, and then finally arrive at something that we all think works."

Filmation's **SHAZAM!** brought DC's comic book new readers, introducing another generation to **Captain Marvel's** fantastic adventures. But on television, the Big Red Cheese wasn't pitted against the extravagant, incredible villains of the comic.

"We wanted to keep **SHAZAM!** within the context of reality as much as possible." continues Prescott, "so that we could get our message across and also not give the kids the feeling that **Captain Marvel** was there to do everything for everybody all the time. We brought **Captain Marvel** in very judiciously at the end of each show and used him sparingly; always with a very strong moral lesson. We brought him in only when he was **really, really** needed. We wanted the kids to think that they are responsible for themselves and what they think and do.

"When you do a show today for children, you have to live within the parameters of present day society needs. The networks have program practices divisions and they work very closely with producers in terms of the 'do's and don'ts.' A lot of the characters that are coming back from the old days into present day television have been changed radically because the world is changed. We try to conform with what is a **now** concept for **now** viewers."

Filmation cast twenty-five year old Michael Gray as Billy Batson. Jackson Bostwick played a rugged first season **Captain Marvel.** Filmation later replaced Bostwick with a somewhat chubbier actor, John Davey.

The first season's cast: Michael Gray (r.) as Billy Batson, Les Tremayne (l.) as Mentor, and Jackson Bostwick as Captain Marvel.

Veteran performer Les Tremayne portrayed Mentor. In his youth, Tremayne starred in numerous radio shows including **The Thin Man, The Falcon, NBC's First Nighter,** and **The Jackie Gleason-Les Tremayne Show.** Les also acted on Broadway and had a featured role in the science fiction film classic, **War of the Worlds.**

To show **Captain Marvel** flying, Filmation strapped Jackson Bostwick to a diving board atop a truck. As

the truck drove down an empty road, the camera shot only the half of Bostwick in front of the board. When **Captain Marvel** leapt into flight, Bostwick would run onto a springboard, catapult over the camera, and land safely on a wrestling mat.

For **SHAZAM!**'s second and third season, **Captain Marvel's** flights were created optically, with a matte. A matte is to superimpose an object over a background so that the object does not come out as a transparent "ghost" image.

First, the cameraman shot cloudy sky footage. Then special effects artists added a black matte of actor John Davey to the center of the film. Next Davey was filmed suspended over a studio counterbalance, surrounded by blackness. The two pieces of film were then combined into one. Captain Marvel appeared where the black matte was originally added to the first shot, soaring over the world.

When the television series proved successful, DC Comics decided to incorporate some of the program's themes into the **SHAZAM!** comic book. In **SHAZAM!** #26, Sterling Morris, Billy's boss at station WHIZ, assigned Batson to tour America producing specials on young people. The old wizard ordained the decision and let a mustached Uncle Dudley become Billy's chaperone, driving the boy's van and taking care of him.

Despite the adaptation, author E. Nelson Bridwell would not sacrifice the comic's special ingredients that have kept **Captain Marvel** popular for almost forty years. In the new series, Cap has already confronted such classic nemeses as Dr. Sivana, Mr. Mind, and Aunt Minerva. In **SHAZAM!** #31, Bridwell even brought back Minute Man, another golden age super hero!

John Davey replaced Jackson Bostwick as Captain Marvel later in the series.

Tom Tyler, seen here in a scene from the 1941 Republic serial, was the first actor to portray Captain Marvel.

More recently, **Shazam!**'s physical appearance was also modified. Artists Alan Weiss and Don Newton substituted the comic's traditionally simplistic style with more sophisticated renderings of the **Marvel** family. DC's careful consideration of **Captain Marvel's** role in the later seventies has given the Big Red Cheese new life.

Filmation's **SHAZAM!** finished its three year run last season as one of CBS-TV's highest rated Saturday morning shows. Eventually, the network will rebroadcast the entire series.

Don Christensen looks forward to someday working on a **SHAZAM!** cartoon, utilizing the comic's surreal universe. "If Filmation ever decides to do an animated **Captain Marvel,** I think it would quite definitely be an interesting project to work on!"

Since **Captain Marvel's** first appearance in 1940, he has held a special place in the hearts of comic book fans universally. Whether Cap is featured in comics, movies, or television, he always brings a magical sense of adventure to his audience. Like many great heroes before him, **Captain** is truly a man for all seasons!

REMEMBERING:

OTTO OSCAR BINDER

August 26, 1911—October 13, 1974

Otto Oscar Binder passed away on October 13, 1974 . . . but he left a legacy of work that will never be forgotten by millions of readers who thrilled to the exploits of *Captain Marvel.* Though he was not involved in the creation of the Big Red Cheese, he scripted 986 of the 1,743 Marvel Family tales . . . over half of the entire saga. He also wrote such features for Fawcett as *Bulletman, Golden Arrow,* and *Captain Venture.*

In 1948, he came to DC, and began working on the *Superman* line of magazines. He wrote the first *Legion of Super-Heroes* story; introduced Jimmy Olsen's *Elastic Lad* identity and signal watch; wrote the debut tales of *Lucy Lane, Super-Monkey, Titano the Super-Ape,* and *Supergirl.* He also created the first *Imaginary Tale,* for *Lois Lane*

The following letter was written by Otto, and published in the fanzine *ALTER EGO* #7, Fall 1964. We reprint a portion of it through the courtesy of Roy Thomas, the editor, now well-known as a writer/editor for Marvel Comics.

Dear Roy,

I'll start now, and see how far I get in giving you some of the information you wanted.

C.C. Beck did most of the Marvel Family and Captain Marvel stories, altho at the start my brother Jack's art shop did MF stories. His chief layout man was Ken Bald. Inkers were legion: Bill Ward, Pete Costanza, etc.

Most, if not all, of the Mary Marvel stories were done either by Jack's workshop or by Jack himself (after his art-shop fell apart through the draft and post-war headaches.)

Regarding **Mr. Mind,** the evil worm from outer space who plagued Captain Marvel for two years . . . Mr. Mind wasn't a worm, at least not for the first half dozen chapters. The CMA **(CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES)** brain-trust composed of Wendell Crowly as editor, Charles Clarence Beck as artist, and myself as scripter, got our heads together to figure out

just **who** or **what** Mr. Mind should be, after I invented him as a disembodied voice.

We undoubtedly went through a hundred concepts, until somebody (and, frankly, in those skull sessions I have no idea who **first** thought of any particular gimmick) . . . somebody said, "Why not take the most UNUSUAL thing we can think of? Not the traditional human or galactic villain, nor robot, nor this nor that of the routine masterminds, but just the goofiest of all things—maybe a **worm!**"

I vaguely recall that this was enthusiastically endorsed by us with much laughter and a tongue-in-cheek attitude; we had no idea that thing would become **popular!??**

The flood of letters, as a matter of practicality, set us to dreaming up new and more **outre** situations between the World's Mightiest Mortal and the Universe's Weakest Creature (which may have been the genetical thought that conjured up the worm.)

Of course, the sheer poles-apart contrast made for a wealth of ideas (as inspirations always do), so that the serial ran for 24 chapters before we decided, perhaps wisely, that too much of a good thing is bad.

I won't exactly say tears were in our eyes that day we worked up the final chapter and executed Mr. Mind; but, in all honesty, I think we all felt a "loss" of some kind. You can't write about **any** character for a length of time—worm, or warm-blooded man—without a sense of sadness at "killing him off".

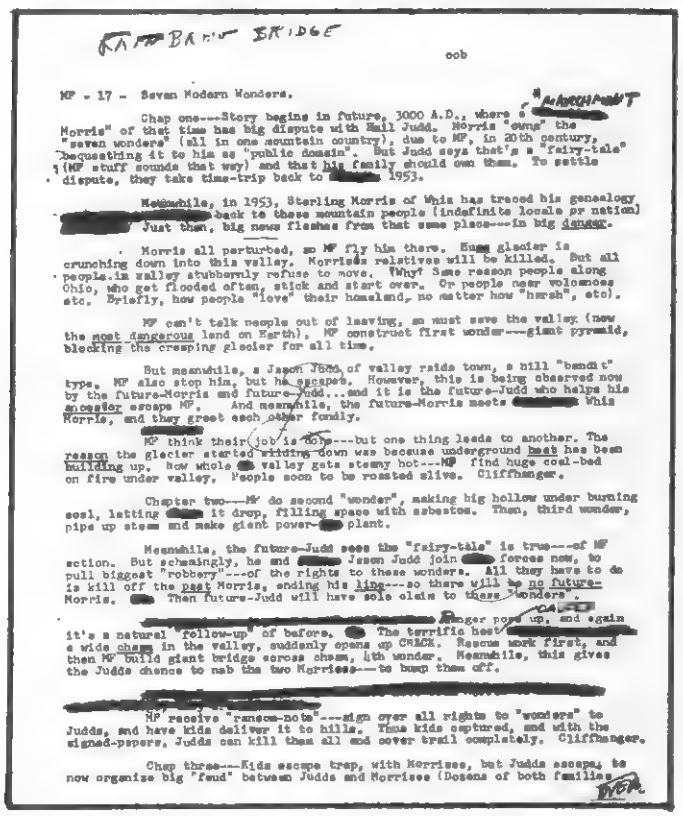
The only other CMA serial that approached Mr. Mind—and quite closely as a matter of fact—was the Tawky Tawny Tiger non-serial succession of sequels. Response was also overwhelming for him, and, because he lent himself to more orthodox concepts, it was Tawny that Beck and I chose as a possible syndicate newspaper strip.

This was after the Superman suit which ended the career of Captain Marvel and his gang in 1953. The incomparable Beck and I did up a series of Tawny strips tailored to the daily syndicate (with Fawcett's blessings), but it came to nothing.

Let me add one word here about that famed but non-earth-shaking event, the Superman VS Captain Marvel suit and its allegations.

First of all, I did not originate the character (that was the doing of Beck and Bill Parker); and secondly I did not read Superman stories (even before the Fawcett ban), except at rare times. Each time I did, I felt it was

The last MARVEL FAMILY story was originally to be called "The Seven MARVELS." Mr. Binder had written an outline for the story, and had completed the first six pages when word came that Fawcett was discontinuing its line of comics. The serial



RAMBAM BRIDGE

oob

MF - 17 - Seven Modern Wonders.

Chap one---Story begins in future, 3000 A.D., where [redacted] Morris" of that time has big dispute with Hail Judd. Morris "owns" the "seven wonders" (all in one mountain country), due to MF, in 20th century, bequeathing it to him as "public domain". But Judd says that's a "fairy-tale" (MF stuff sounds that way) and that his family should own them. To settle dispute, they take time-trip back to [redacted] 1953.

Meanwhile, in 1953, Sterling Morris of Whiz has traced his genealogy [redacted] back to these mountain people (indefinite locale pr nation) Just then, big news flashes from that same place---in big danger.

Morris all perturbed, so MF fly him there. Some glacier is crunching down into this valley. Morrises relatives will be killed. But all people in valley stubbornly refuse to move. (Why? Same reason people along Ohio, who get flooded often, stick and start over. Or people near volcanoes etc. Briefly, how people "love" their homeland, no matter how "harsh", etc).

MF can't talk people out of leaving, so must save the valley (now the most dangerous land on Earth). MF construct first wonder---giant pyramid, blocking the creeping glacier for all time.

But meanwhile, a Jason Judd of valley raids town, a hill "bandit" type. MF also stop him, but he escapes. However, this is being observed now by the future-Morris and future-Judd...and it is the future-Judd who helps his ancestor escape MF. And meanwhile, the future-Morris meets [redacted] Whiz Morris, and they greet each other fondly.

MF think their job is done---but one thing leads to another. The reason the glacier started sliding down was because underground heat has been building up. Now whole [redacted] valley gets steamy hot---MF find huge coal-bed on fire under valley. People soon to be roasted alive. Cliffhanger.

Chapter two---MF do second "wonder", making big hollow under burning coal, letting [redacted] it drop, filling space with asbestos. Then, third wonder, pipe up steam and make giant power-[redacted] plant.

Meanwhile, the future-Judd sees the "fairy-tale" is true---of MF action. But scheamingly, he and [redacted] Jason Judd join [redacted] forces now, to pull biggest "robbery"---of the rights to these wonders. All they have to do is kill off the past Morris, ending his line---so there will be no future-Morris. [redacted] Then future-Judd will have sole claim to these wonders.

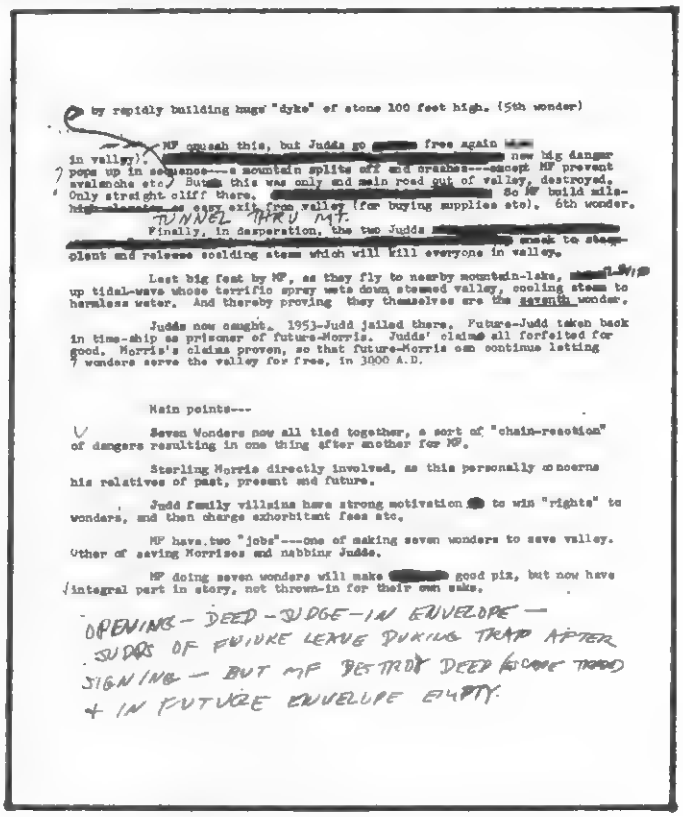
[redacted] danger pops up, and again it's a natural "follow-up" of before. [redacted] The terrific heat [redacted] a wide chasm in the valley, suddenly opens up CRACK. Rescue work first, and then MF build giant bridge across chasm, 4th wonder. Meanwhile, this gives the Judds chance to nab the two Morrises---to bump them off.

[redacted]

MF receive "ransom-note"---sign over all rights to "wonders" to Judds, and have kids deliver it to hills. Then kids captured, and with the signed-papers, Judds can kill them all and cover trail completely. Cliffhanger.

Chap three---Kids escape trap, with Morrises, but Judds escape, to now organize big "feud" between Judds and Morrises (Dozens of both families

OVER



by rapidly building huge "dyke" of stone 100 feet high. (5th wonder)

MF squash this, but Judds go [redacted] free again [redacted] in valley). [redacted] new big danger pops up in sequence---a mountain splits off and crashes---except MF prevent avalanche etc. Sum: this was only end main road out of valley, destroyed. Only straight cliff there. [redacted] So MF build mile-high elevator as easy exit from valley (for buying supplies etc). 6th wonder.

TUNNEL THRU MT.

Finally, in desperation, the two Judds [redacted] sneak to steam-plant and release scalding steam which will kill everyone in valley.

Last big feat by MF, as they fly to nearby mountain-lake, [redacted] up tidal-wave whose terrific spray vets down steamed valley, cooling steam to harmless water. And thereby proving they themselves are the seventh wonder.

Judds now caught. 1953-Judd jailed there. Future-Judd taken back in time-ship as prisoner of future-Morris. Judds' claims all forfeited for good. Morris's claims proven, so that future-Morris can continue letting 7 wonders serve the valley for free, in 3000 A.D.

Main points---

Seven Wonders now all tied together, a sort of "chain-reaction" of dangers resulting in one thing after another for MF.

Sterling Morris directly involved, as this personally concerns his relatives of past, present and future.

Judd family villains have strong motivation [redacted] to win "rights" to wonders, and then charge exhorbitant fees etc.

MF have two "jobs"---one of making seven wonders to save valley. Other of saving Morrises and nabbing Judds.

MF doing seven wonders will make [redacted] good pix, but now have integral part in story, not thrown-in for their own sake.

OPENING - DEED - JUDGE - IN ENVELOPE - JUDGE OF FUTURE LEAVE DURING TRAP AFTER SIGNING - BUT MF DESTROY DEED BECOME TRAP + IN FUTURE ENVELOPE EMPTY.

not for Captain Marvel, who was developed into a wholly different area of humor, fantasy, and "whimsy", you might say . . . not the dead-serious grimness and plodding "consistancy" of Superman.

In my opinion, my development of Captain Marvel and his "family" (I was chief writer and idea-man from mid-1941 till the end) was entirely my own, and, if anything, it avoided any of the "tone" of Superman completely. This I can state categorically—**not one story idea was ever "lifted" from Superman!**

But enough of that long-gone event . . . I had had some two million words of science fiction published between 1932 and 1945. The comics bug had already bitten me as early as 1939. For one Harry Chesler, among the pre-comics pioneers who first put out picture booklets using only newspaper strips at first, I was asked to write some **new and original features**—a really great innovation at that time. I did write up the following comics-type scripts for him:

DAN HASTINGS, adventure character; **SCOTT RAND,** ditto; **ASTOUNDING MAN,** a scientifically "super" hero; and **IRON MUNRO,** space explorer; all from early 1939 into 1940, after which the big publishers lured me away.

My first comics scripts among the big publishers (Chesler never followed through to produce all-new comics mags) were for **The Black Owl** in **PRIZE COMICS,** starting in late 1940.

In March, 1941 I first wrote for Fawcett with the **Mr. Scarlet** assignment. After Ed Herron, then chief editor, saw my stuff, he began "grooming" me for the big boy (Captain Marvel) by having me do **Captain**

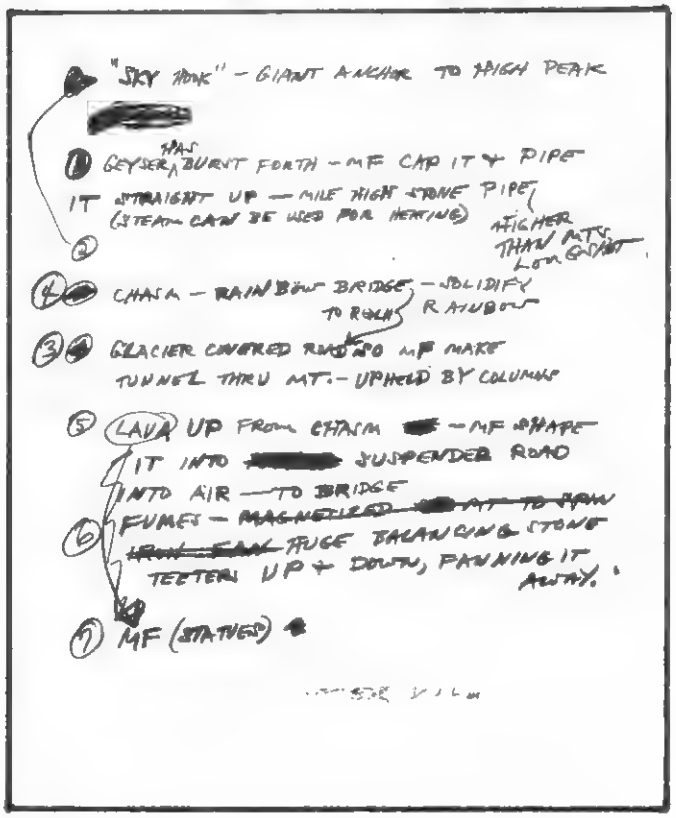
Otto and Jack Binder with their wives, circa 1945.

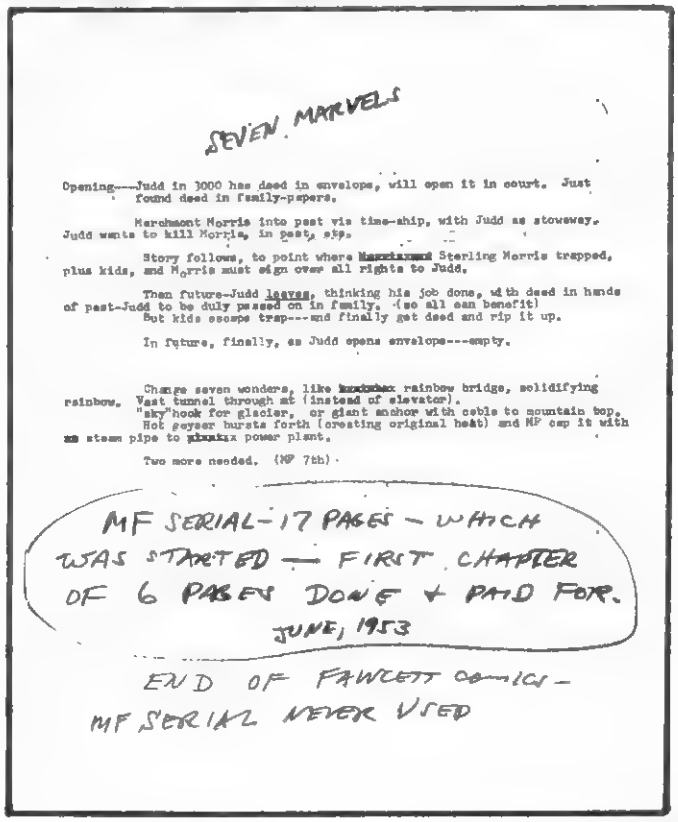
Venture, Spy Smasher, Minute Man, Bulletman, El Carim, Golden Arrow, Ibis, and **Dr. Voodoo,** all thru 1941.

Oddly enough (not so oddly, since I was a **pulp** writer), my first CM story was in prose form—the **CAPTAIN MARVEL STORYBOOK** series, including **The Scorpion** in August 1941.

My first **CAPTAIN MARVEL COMICS** script was written in December, 1941 and appeared in the ninth issue, April, 1942. The end result of this, some twelve years later in 1953, was a total of 529 stories about the Big Red Cheese alone. My present-day home in Englewood, New Jersey, was dedicated at a Fawcett party as being "The House that Captain Marvel Built". Truer words were never spoken. He paid for it twice over.

was never used, and the first six pages of the script were lost. Below are reproduced the manuscript pages from Mr. Binder's original outline. Notice the "oob" signature at the top of page one, which stands for OTTO O. BINDER.


"SKY HOOK" – GIANT ANCHOR TO HIGH PEAK
GEYSER BURST FORTH – MF CAP IT + PIPE
IT STRAIGHT UP – MILE HIGH STONE PIPE
(STEAM CAN BE USED FOR HEATING)
HIGHER THAN MT'S LOW GIANT
CHASM – RAINBOW BRIDGE – SOLIDIFY TO ROCK
RAINBOW
GLACIER COVERED
MF MAKE TUNNEL THRU MT. – UPHELD BY COLUMNS
LAVA UP FROM CHASM – MF SHAPE IT INTO SUSPENDER ROAD
INTO AIR – TO BRIDGE
FUMES – MAGNETIZED
TEETER UP + DOWN, PANNING IT AWAY.
MF (STAYED)



SEVEN MARVELS

Opening---Judd in 3000 has deed in envelope, will open it in court. Just found deed in family-papers.

Marchmont Morris into past via time-ship, with Judd as stowaway. Judd wants to kill Morris, in past, etc.

Story follows, to point where Marchmont Sterling Morris trapped, plus kids, and Morris must sign over all rights to Judd.

Then future-Judd leaves, thinking his job done, with deed in hands of past-Judd to be duly passed on in family. (so all can benefit)
But kids escape trap---and finally get deed and rip it up.

In future, finally, as Judd opens envelope---empty.

Change seven wonders, like rainbow bridge, solidifying rainbow. Vast tunnel through mt (instead of elevator).
"sky"hook for glacier, or giant anchor with cable to mountain top.
Hot geyser bursts forth (creating original heat) and MF cap it with an steam pipe to power plant.

Two more needed. (MF 7th).

MF SERIAL – 17 PAGES – WHICH WAS STARTED — FIRST CHAPTER OF 6 PAGES DONE + PAID FOR. JUNE, 1953

END OF FAWCETT COMICS – MF SERIAL NEVER USED

In that fabulous period, as the comics phenomenon rose and expanded with a greater rapidity, I think, than any other literary "fad", the rates to writers and artists exploded at astounding speed.

The earliest rate I recall in 1939 was $2 per page (5 to 8 panels), which became $3 in 1941 when I began with Fawcett, then kept shooting up through the war-time (I was first OWI-deferred, then 1-B for a hearing defect, then 3-A married man deffered, finally 4-A over-age), to reach a standard rate of $10 a page—with higher exceptions for special short-lengths or characters, up to $15 per page. All of us writers at that time called it "The Golden Rut" with a sneer, all the way to the bank.

New titles were launched in that dizzying period with machinegun rapidity. I personally launched (by writing the original scripts) **MARY MARVEL, THE MARVEL FAMILY,** and others for Fawcett, not to mention a dozen or more for other publishers, such as **YOUNG ALLIES** for Goodman.

My most stunning surprise came when I sold a science-fiction pulp story to **FANTASY & SCIENCE-FICTION** mag in 1953 and received an acceptance letter from one of the co-editors, Anthony Boucher, who added a paragraph: "I am a great Captain Marvel fan, along with my two boys. We all know by heart most of the Captain's adventures over a great many years, with their ingenuity of plot. A lot of your Jon Jarl short-shorts have very nice gimmicks too."

One more anecdote of the comics age: Just before the axe fell in 1953, I was working on a **MARVEL FAMILY** script, whose outline is before me as I write this letter. It was titled "The Seven Marvels"—a **new serial.** Only the first chapter of six pages was completed, for which I was paid; then Fawcett announced the demise of the Marvel books, and all the other comics they had published.

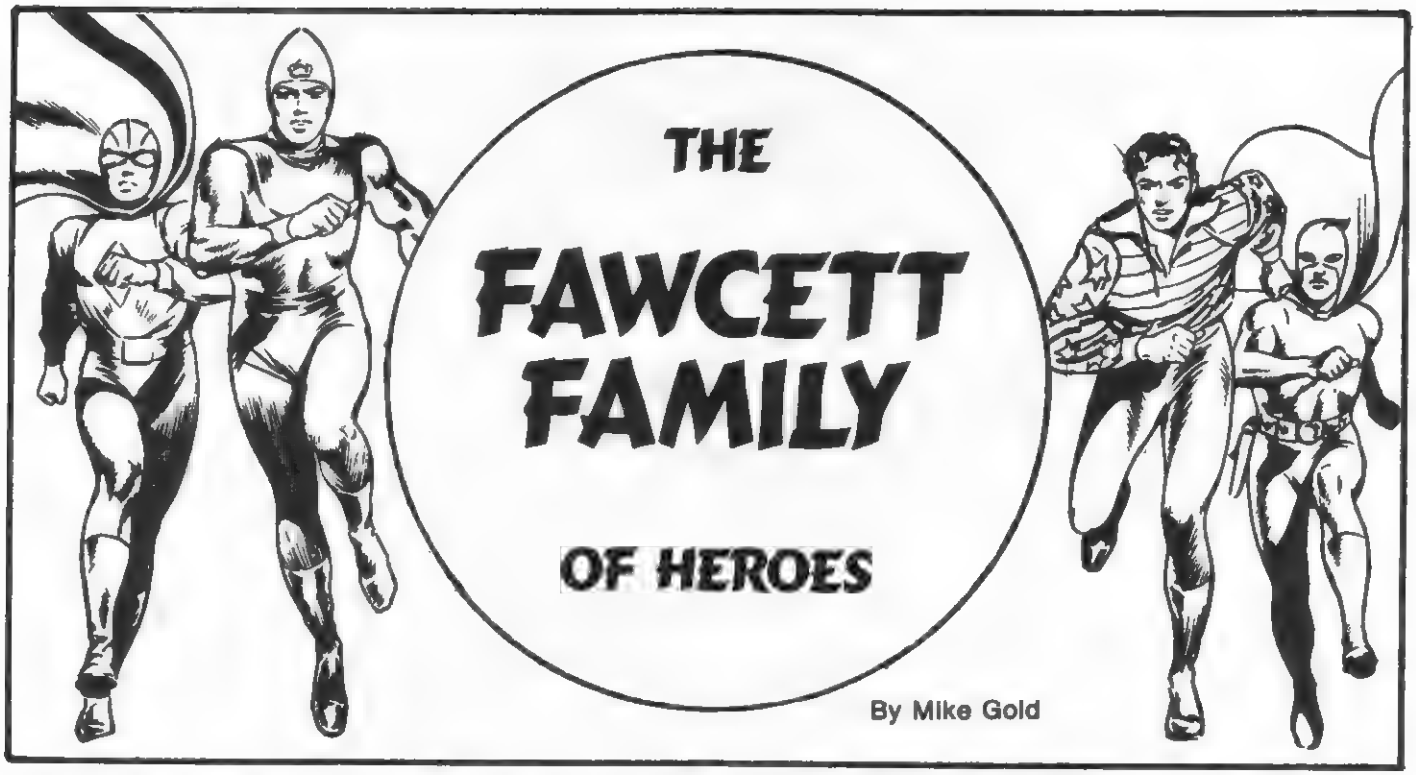
If you like indigestible facts, my **total** comics output —all publishers and all characters—up to the end of 1957 was 2,227 stories for 18,100 pages, or approximately 100,000 panels.

After that, I wrote many more for DC's Superman mags from 1957-60. I dropped comics entirely from 1960 to 1964 while switching to full-time editing/writing for **SPACE WORLD MAGAZINE.** Then, after this was sold to another publisher (Ray Palmer of science-fiction and flying-saucer fame), I resumed with Mort Weisinger, chief of the Superman group at DC, as a fill-in for my non-fiction books and my NASA-contract space writings.

The above reminiscences, disjointed and seemingly narcissistic, are offered only with the thought of shedding some insight on those days of yore when comics were in flower. To attempt any sweeping, definitive picture is madness. Only in the tiny flashes of light given by individual anecdotes and recollections of those of us in the field as pros at the time can some any rational picture of what to me is still an incomprehensible rise-and-fall of a great empire—the world of picture-story heroes whose peers will never again be seen.

Best Luck,
Otto Binder

MORE PAGES OF YOUR FAVORITE COMIC CHARACTERS
JAN. NO. 89
THE MARVEL FAMILY
10¢
A FAWCETT PUBLICATION
HOLY MOLEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MARVEL FAMILY?
Read AND THEN THERE WERE NONE!



THE FAWCETT FAMILY OF HEROES

By Mike Gold

During the past sixteen years, comic book readers have had little in the way of variety of styles from which to select. There have been the DC comics, with their particular style, and the Marvel comics, with their particular style, and little else. Granted, from time to time various companies popped up on the scene—King, Charlton, Tower, Atlas, Mighty—but few of these lasted longer than two years, and there was little overlap.

It wasn't like that in the 1940's. There were a great many comic book companies, and each had its own particular style. DC's had that professional, almost governmental look—DC's third-string characters were better known than most other companies' first. Timely (now Marvel) Comics could have been published by William Randolph Hearst—their covers, characters and concepts screamed at you: the World War II punk rock of the time. Fawcett's characters were clean and professional-looking, smooth and slick. Few ever wore masks. MLJ heroes all had solid concepts and fantastic costumes, but generally suffered from poor artwork and invisible storytelling.

Quality had the more creative artists—most were graduates of the Will Eisner school. Their characters were unique and innovative. Fiction House looked like it published Quality's rejects—no real characters to speak of, fine (albeit cheaper looking) artwork, little worthwhile scripting. There were other outfits as well, each generally having one or two noteworthy characters and a dozen back-up features that barely interest even the more maniacal collectors.

WHAT'S THE EXCITEMENT ABOUT, CAP?
YES, WHY DO YOU WANT THE NEXT ISSUE OF WHIZ COMICS?
DAWGONNIT! WE LOSE MORE WINDOWS THIS WAY! WHY CAN'T CAPTAIN MARVEL USE THE DOOR!

I wasn't around for that period, having started reading comics seriously in 1956. When I became a serious collector—back when a $100 copy of **SUPERMAN** #1 would go unsold because the price was too high—I was interested in those 1940's DC's and the Simon/Kirby and Bill Everett Timely's, and I reveled in the Quality's but I had little use for the other companies—particularly Fawcett Comics. I remember buying a mass of golden age comics from Jerry Bails (the father of modern comic book fandom) and complaining about the quantity of Fawcetts. I always suspected Jerry thought I was crazy—he probably knew I'd get around to enjoying them.

Well, folks, it took me a couple of years, but when I did . . . well, I wouldn't be writing this article if I hated them.

You generally think of Fawcett as a one feature operation. **Captain Marvel** and his brood were so overwhelming (in their massive presence, if not in their asthetic appeal) they overshadowed the second-stringers. You couldn't fault the quantity of top-level talent working for the organization, led by

master-artist Mac Raboy, best known for his work on **FLASH GORDON.** Dan Barry, another top Fawcett artist, also worked on **FLASH GORDON**—something he continues to this day. People like Kurt Schaffenberger and Ed Herron went on to work on many of DC's top features, and Schaffenberger continues to draw the Big Red Cheese in stories today. Joe Simon and Jack Kirby were with Fawcett in the early days, and former Fawcett artist Ken Bald is behind the drawing board doing **Dr. Kildare.**

Of course, innovators like C.C. Beck and Otto Binder had creative input to the entire line—Binder worked for no less than 17 different comics companies, including EC Comics, and scripted virtually every top-ranked golden age comic book feature at one time or another.

I think much of the reason one tends to ignore the Fawcett second-stringers is the fact that few of them enjoyed their own titles; those that had their own books saw irregular publication. **Bulletman's** sixteen issues were published over a six year period, **Ibis'** six took seven years, **Minute Man's** three came out over a two year period, and **Spy Smasher's** eleven solo-issues came out over three years. Yet each of these characters averaged eight years as a back-up feature in an anthology title like **Whiz Comics** or **Master Comics.**

Whereas the Fawcett heroes never got together to meet en masse like the **Justice Society** did (Julie Schwartz E. Nelson Bridwell and Marty Pasko finally got a number of them together in 1976 for a **Justice League** three-parter), they probably enjoyed more cross-overs than any other group in the 1940's. **Captain Marvel** was there on a lot of covers—he was so popular that the mere presence on the cover would lend a major boost to sales—but there were a number of noteworthy team-ups, even among the third-string characters. **Bulletman** and **Bulletgirl** met up with **Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel Jr.,** and **Minute Man. Radar** spun-off from **Captain Marvel** #35. **Spy Smasher** met up with the Big Red Cheese on several occasions, and was the only hero to work with **Captain Midnight. Commando Yank** met **Phantom Eagle** in **Wow Comics** #33. **Golden Arrow,** a western hero, met **Captain Marvel** and **Ibis** in **America's Greatest** #4 (more of a cameo, actually, but you get the idea), and **Mr. Scarlet** and **Pinky** were there to help **Mary Marvel** get established in **Wow** #9. In these respects, Fawcett was two decades ahead of its time, as such cross-over activity wasn't seen again until Marvel jumped into it with both feet in the mid-1960's.

Fawcett placed a greater emphasis on the committee-system than did its competitors. DC at the time was actually two companies—Detective Comics and All-American—with two separate publishers and editorial directors and a number of individual editors. Timely was very small operation. Quality and Fiction House purchased from comic book production houses. Yet Fawcett

came completely equipped with an involved company president (who also worried over Fawcett's magazine book and distribution companies), a comics editor, an art director, and, quite often, a co-editor. All of these individuals were deeply involved in the creative process, and they worked closely with their writers and artists in the creation of their super-heroes.

Whereas few of the Fawcett heroes enjoyed their own titles for any great length of time, most of the characters were created in the early days of the company and many of them were still being published when the company quit the comics field in 1953. When the editorial committee created a hero, he was created to stick around. **Bulletman** and **Bulletgirl, Golden Arrow,** and **Ibis** all out-lived such stalwarts as **The Human Torch** and **The Sub-Mariner;** all of their other major super-heroes outlived World War II by a couple of years—something most second-string

super-heroes failed to do.

For example, **Whiz Comics** #2 (#1 never saw newsstand distribution) had, among its seven features, four strips that were there one hundred and fifty-five issues later, when the title was cancelled. Well, actually, **Golden Arrow** stopped with #154, but **Captain Marvel, Ibis** and **Lance O'Casey** (a non-costumed, nonsuper hero) made it to that last issue. A war filler was used in **Golden Arrow's** place in #155.

Fawcett was significant in at least two other ways. These folks published the first 32 page super-hero title perhaps a dozen years before the practice became commonplace. **Nickle Comics** cost (you guessed it) five cents and was published bi-weekly. The experiment failed after eight issues, although **Bulletman** premiered here, as did a second-stringer named **The Red Gaucho.** Both moved over to **Master Comics** when the 32 pager bit the dust; **Gaucho** stayed there for six issues. Evidently the world wasn't ready for a South American super-hero who didn't wear a mask and had no discernable super-powers. **Bulletman** was a bit luckier, staying in **Master Comics** for a one hundred issue spread.

Fawcett is also distinguished for being the only publisher to regularly release a number of titles on a less than monthly basis. **Captain Marvel Adventures, Whiz, Wow, Master, Spy Smasher, Capt. Midnight,** and **Captain Marvel Jr.** were all published every 28 days for varying spells during the 1942-1943 years; **Captain Marvel Adventures** even managed a number of tri-weekly issues as well. This is significant as a great many publishers—including DC Comics—had to make cutbacks in successful titles' frequencies due to wartime paper restrictions.

As for the characters themselves . . . well, outside of the Marvel Family, they tended to be more successful than they were memorable. They did not have flashy costumes as did **Captain America** or **Green Lantern,** they did not have amazing or unusual concepts as did **The Spectre** or **The Human**

Torch, nor were they immortalized on radio or in film (with one exception) like **Batman** and **The Vigilante.** They were solid heroes, with all the commercial elements including first-rate stories and art.

Ibis the Invincible, who made it through all 155 issues of **Whiz** missing #107 for some reason, was the **Dr. Strange** of his time—a sort of semi-costumed **Dr. Fate.** An ancient Egyptian prince("YoungPrince Amentep . . . we call him Ibis" the museum guard stated strangely, in **Whiz** #2), he came back to life for some unexplained reason and immediately started searching for his long-lost love. After looking everywhere and fighting crime along the way, he discovers his love was entombed back at the museum all the time. He rarely made such foolish mistakes again—of course, he didn't have to, as he was armed with the remarkable Ibistick, which would do absolutely anything **Ibis** wanted, thus making **Ibis** invincible (and hence the name). The editors swiftly revealed the Ibistick couldn't work against magic, thereby setting the pace for a truly mystic and usually exciting series. Every comics publisher had its **Mandrake the Magician** imitation, but only **Ibis** regularly took advantage of the Egyptain origin (**Dr. Fate** could have, but didn't).

Whiz #2 also premiered **Spy Smasher,** a costumed soldier who was more-or-less created to fight one of the top spies in comics, **The Mask** (no relation to a rival superhero with the same same). It took **Spy Smasher** over a year to do **The Mask** in . . . but **The Mask** had the final victory, as he hypnotized **S.S.** into pulling off bombing missions after the fatal conflict. Only **Captain Marvel** could stop **Spy Smasher**—a battle that raged through three double-length stories in **Whiz** #16 through #18. **Capt. Marvel** finally restored **Smasher** to his senses, and the latter faithfully resumed mopping up wartime agents through the end of the war.

As comic book spies would disappear with the armistice and not reappear until the McCarthy era of the early 1950's, **Spy Smasher** changed his name to **Crime Smasher,** and went out of business about a year later. He lost his costume with the name-change; these were probably two of the least wise moves Fawcett made.

Spy Smasher had two other distinctions: he was the only Fawcett creation—outside of **Capt. Marvel**—to have his own movie serial, and some of his 1942 adventures contained some of Carmine Infantino's first published work.

Bulletman, as noted previously, started with **Nickle** #1, published about two months after **Whiz** #2. He enjoyed **Captain America's** basic origin roughly one year before Cap saw print—a scrawny weakling who concocted a chemical potion that would build massive muscles and somehow make him both smarter and taller. Thus endowed, he quickly fashioned a bullet-shaped helmet that allowed him to defy gravity and shoot across the skies like a bullet. Interestingly, this feature had another **Captain America** gimmick months prior to the first Cap story—his secret identity was discovered by the police chief's daughter and instead of buying her off or chemically altering her memory, he adopted the woman as his partner, **Bulletgirl.** Together, they fought evildoers until late 1949.

There were two other original costumed crimefighters of note.

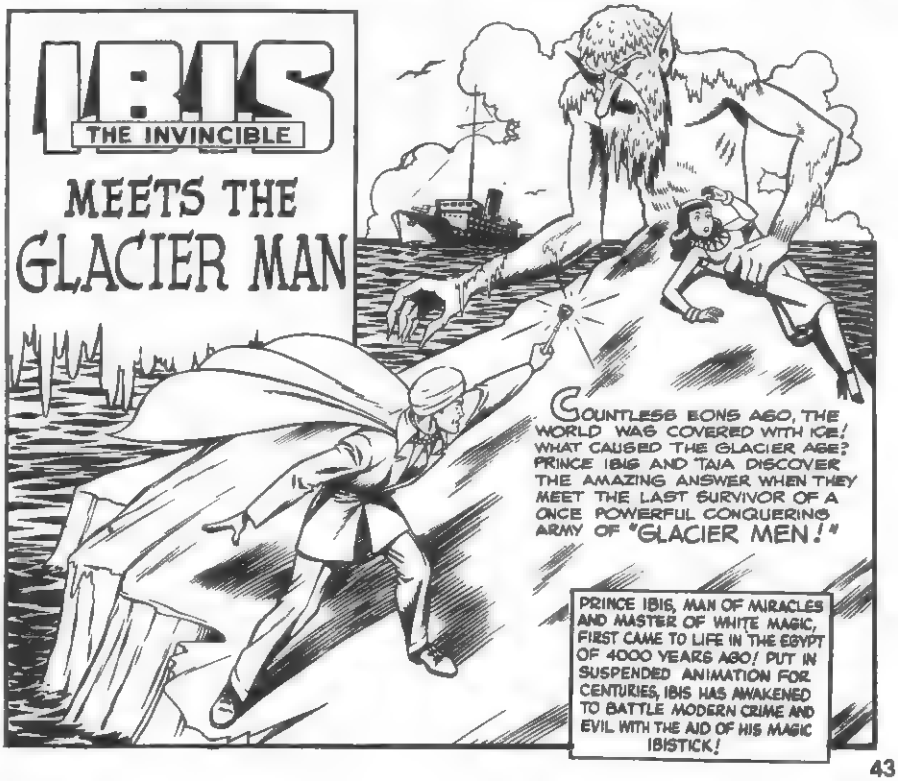
I DON'T EXACTLY KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, BUT A FACE LIKE YOURS DOESN'T NEED EXCUSES FOR BEING PUNCHED!
HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE... & I GOT A CALL FROM THE WHIZ EDITOR TO GET DOWN HERE TO HELP SMASH SOME SPIES!
SPY SMASHER! YOU GOT BACK THE VITAL PLATE! NAZIS WERE TRYING TO STOP US FROM PRINTING THOSE SABOTEURS' PICTURES!

Minute Man premiered in **Master** #11, and he, too, contained elements of the **Captain America** myth months prior to Cap's origin. Private Jack Weston donned a red-white-and-blue costume whenever in the proximity of saboteurs, and he beat the heck out of them until mid-1944, retiring a year before the end of the war. He came out of retirement for a brief appearance in a 1977 issue of **Shazam!**

Mr. Scarlet helped launch Fawcett's **Wow Comics** in 1941. **Scarlet** was an avenger—operating outside of the law to bring justice to those who confounded the courts. Jack Kirby was the penciller of the origin tale. **Scarlet** differed from **The Batman** only in the color of his costume and in the fact that he was somewhat less reticent to use a gun. Somehow, **Mr. Scarlet** was allowed to adopt a kid partner named **Pinky;** together they fought crime in virtually every issue of **Wow Comics** (the last was #69, Fall, 1948), appearing in as many as three different stories in each of the early issues and two stories in each of five mid-1946 issues.

My personal favorite Fawcett crimefighter didn't wear a costume per se, instead he donned other people's clothes. Basically a nemesis of spies (by now, you realize most of Fawcett's characters were waging war on spies), **Radar** came equipped with a mustache that inexplicably vanished when the need arose, a reversible trenchcoat, and acrobatic skills. Radar was originally Private Pep Pepper, a skillful USO entertainer selected by **Captain Marvel,** Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin and Chaing Kai-Shek (a heavy group) to be something of an international policeman. He premiered in **Captain Marvel Adventures** #35, and went on to work in **Master Comics** #50 through #87, the latter published at the end of 1947.

More interesting, though, was **Radar's** behind-the-scenes origin. According to Jim Steranko's **History of Comics,** the U.S. Office of War Information wanted to create a propaganda comic to aid in domestic morale. The strangest committee to ever work in comics gathered to create **Radar.** Fawcett Editor Will Lieberson, and writer


IBIS
THE INVINCIBLE
MEETS THE GLACIER MAN
COUNTLESS EONS AGO, THE WORLD WAS COVERED WITH ICE! WHAT CAUSED THE GLACIER AGE? PRINCE IBIS AND TAIA DISCOVER THE AMAZING ANSWER WHEN THEY MEET THE LAST SURVIVOR OF A ONCE POWERFUL CONQUERING ARMY OF "GLACIER MEN!"
PRINCE IBIS, MAN OF MIRACLES AND MASTER OF WHITE MAGIC, FIRST CAME TO LIFE IN THE EGYPT OF 4000 YEARS AGO! PUT IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR CENTURIES, IBIS HAS AWAKENED TO BATTLE MODERN CRIME AND EVIL WITH THE AID OF HIS MAGIC IBISTICK!

Otto Binder were joined by Rex Stout, author of the Nero Wolfe novels, Paul Gallico, popular writer of **The Poseidon Adventure** and other novels, and noted intellectual Clifton Fadiman to create this feature.

Fawcett's final spy fighter of note wasn't really the property of Fawcett Publications. **Captain Midnight** was an extremely popular radio super-star (and hero of the newspaper comics and movie serials); he already had a number of stories published in Dell Comics' **The Funnies** and **Popular Comics.** Evidently, Midnight's copyright holders disliked Dell's treatment of the famed aviator (sort of a flying **Batman** with his Secret Squadron of helpers), as Fawcett's **Captain Midnight** #1 was published just one month after the final **Popular Comics** appearance. **Midnight** and **Spy Smasher** were remarkably similar in nearly every respect, right down to the aviator's goggles and helmet. The two even teamed up in **America's Greatest Comics** #8, Fawcett's version of **World's Finest. Midnight** comic ran 67 issues, running three years longer than World War II. Oddly enough, his television series started a few years later.

There were many other Fawcett heroes, third-stringers at best. **Golden Arrow,** as noted, ran almost the entire length of **Whiz'** run, and in six issues of his own comic as well. There isn't much to say for him except that he was a cross between **The Lone Ranger, Robin Hood** and **The Green Arrow. Nyoka, The Jungle Girl** was incredibly popular —due to her status as a Saturday matinee Star—and she enjoyed 83 issues of **Master Comics** and 77 issues of her own magazine. Nyoka, of course, was little more than a female version of Tarzan with slightly less savage instincts.

Phantom Eagle and **Commando Yank** were two popular heroes in the **Spy Smasher/Captain Midnight** mold, having appeared in roughly sixty issues of **Wow Comics** apiece. They even teamed up, too.

Lesser super-heroes such as **El Carim, Devil's Dagger, Diamond, Jack, The Hunchback,** and **Zoro the Mystery Man** each populated the scene for a time, hiding in the back various titles, none lasting longer than three years. In fact, **Zoro** and **Diamond Jack** were in the short-lived (seven issues) **Slam Bang Comics** title, and were probably the most noteworthy features in that unfortunate series.

Masterman appeared in the first six issues of **Master Comics,** which were tabloid sized, and is noteworthy only for being a flagrant **Superman** rip-off. So flagrant, in

fact, that DC Comics sued Fawcett and immediately blasted the character out of existence. A dry run for **Superman's** battle against **Captain Marvel,** no doubt, which is detailed elsewhere in this issue of **Amazing World.**

Lance O'Casey was that other character to make the 155 issue **Whiz** run, missing a couple of odd issues here and there. He had four issues of his own title: three in 1946 and one in 1948. He was probably the only high-seas adventurer (as opposed to super-hero) to see any sort of success in the comics medium.

1951 saw Fawcett pick up another property, **Captain Video,** television's first original hero. George Evans was the artist for the six issue run; evidently, television heroes translated to comics as poorly as comics heroes translated to television.

Fawcett's mammoth line of western features is, thankfully, outside the domain of this article. Westerns were very, very big in the late 1940's and early 1950's, a period when super-heroes were uncommercial and crime and horror comics all but illegal. I try not to put them down as they saved the industry, but Fawcett's westerns were as unnoteworthy as everybody else's (DC's featured artwork by Alex Toth, Carmine Infantino, Joe Kubert, and Gil Kane; it's easier to remember the names of the artists than the names of the characters).

In case you've lost track, Fawcett published a number of anthology super-hero titles: **Master Comics,** with **Bulletman, Captain Marvel Jr.,** and **Radar; Nickle Comics,** with **Bulletman; Slam Bang** Comics, with nobdy in particular; **Whiz Comics,** with **Captain Marvel, Ibis,** and **Spy Smasher; Wow Comics,** with **Mr. Scarlet, Phantom Eagle, Commando Yank,** and **Mary Marvel;** and a handful of one-character titles. They also published two 96 page, 15¢ titles featuring only their top characters: **All-Hero,** which ran one issue, and **America's Greatest Comics** which ran eight. If you're interested in a token Fawcett collection and have a spare $720.00 around, these 96 pagers would be a nice place to start. It should be noted several black-and-white reprint editions have been published by and for fans and are available at most conventions and some comics stores.

Contrary to popular belief, DC Comics does not own the Fawcett character outright. Every time a Fawcett character is used by DC, Fawcett receives a fee. It is for this reason that none of these characters have been resurrected outside of the pages of **Shazam!** comics, and, since there are plenty of good ideas for original super-heroes floating around, none of them are likely to be in the forseeable future.

The trouble is, most of these characters probably would not work today. Fighting spies and saboteurs isn't what it used to be—you need Nazis or the McCarthy era to make that type of story work. From the standpoint of world peace, however, it's better—a whole lot better.

Amazing World of Letters

Dear Editor,

Boy, you really blew it when you cancelled **RAGMAN.** What new projects have you got planned? When are you going to bring back **the Assassin?**

Now that I've given you what you don't want, I'll try to give you what you do want. Ready? Here goes.

Boy, you really blew it when you cancelled **PLASTICMAN.** What other new projects have you got planned? When are you going to bring back **The Squadron of Justice?**

What you just read was a silly, boring illustration of why the **AMAZING WORLD** letters page isn't brimming with scintillating, tantalizing missives from your faithful fans. It ain't easy to come up with a good controversy.

Comments on your various magazines should go to the letters pages of those various magazines. So **The Amazing World of Letters** should be devoted to DC in general, right? But what is there to write about that could really get something going?

I can't think of a thing. Maybe I'm not trying hard enough. Maybe this is a testimony to how well you're doing everything.

This letter has about as much chance of getting printed as **Shrinking Violet** has against **Superman,** but you asked for letters and you've now got at least one . . . feeble as it may be. I just thought I'd let you know why you don't get many letters better than this one.

Stuart Snyder
119 Kennedy Blvd.
Bellmawr, N.J. 08031

This single letter haunted the *AMAZING WORLD* mailbox for a long time by itself, leading ye editor to begin to doubt that it might indeed be true. But then one morning there were TWO letters in the box! Then a THIRD! And the number began to increase regularly. Among them came the following letter, which we feel will spark that "good controversy" that Stuart was referring to.—CB

Dear Cary and Bob:

Given my druthers, I'd just as soon see "continuity" be stricken from any and all Comic Book Guide Books. For what few advantages it may possess, continuity is capable of creating a hundred more offsetting problems. I have always been a firm believer in the early 1960's era of continuity: just enough to carry between issues, and nothing more.

While I have been reading comic books since 1966, it was not until the year 1976 that I began to buy Marvel Comics with any degree of regularity (like, more than once in 10 years). The reason for this should be obvious: having obtained a driver's license, I was able to trek to my local comic book dealer as often as desired; hence, continued stories were no problem to me anymore.

However, at the tender age of eight, and continuing up to that "tender" age of 16, I thoroughly and effectively ignored the entire body of Marveldom. A few misguided friends here and there would say, "C'mon, Dave! There are great stories!" But, I could always counter with, "Yeah, but they're always continued, and I have a tough enough time just getting enough money to buy comics, let alone find transportation to the comics stand."

In the sixties, when DC was pressed into continuing the story, the following issue would be stuffed full of flashbacks, such sequences occupying at least four pages. Now, at the time, I didn't mind, because nine times out of ten, I had missed the preceding story. Today, however, the practice dangerously eats into that 17-page limitation that all but strangles coherency. If you think such practices are no longer applied, may I refer you to the Bob Haney lead-off **Superman/Batman** feature in **WORLD'S FINEST** #247. Of course, Haney is another story, and he really does not figure into this discussion. Bob, you see, is an old-timer insofar as plotting goes, and hence he is one of the few writers today who are able to effectively ignore other issues and other comics. But like I said, enough about him.

Mere continuity of issues is not the real problem, though. The difficulty lies in trying to tie up every individual plot-hole from the variously edited stories of any particular hero or group. I would immediately challenge anybody to attempt to do so with **Superman,** or better still, with the **Superman** "family" of magazine. How about a Gruenwald or Pasko attempt to sew up every strand of Kryptonian mythology, every scientific gadget, every time-travel, every Legion Guest-feature. After progressing to about 1953, I could imagine Mark's blood pressure would be quite high, and he would still be looking forward to those excellent "imaginary" stories.

What I'm saying is, damn the continuity! I could care less if **Dr. Fate** should be 65 or whatever according to cover dates! I don't buy

these comics to read intricate explanations about Einstein's theory of time relativity, and how it can be overcome. I just want a half-decent story involving age-old and timeless legends.

Look at the comic strips again, as Pasko did in the **Wonder Woman** feature. For every "Gasoline Alley," there are 500 "Peanuts" and "Beetle Baileys" and even "Doonesburys." Nobody seems to mind that Doonesbury and Zonker have been in college for six or seven years. Readers just want to be entertained, not confused.

Since every comic cannot be edited by Schwartz (shucks!), it is up to the writers and editors of any given comic to be aware of major changes. If a major character has been killed off, then for Pete's sake don't resurrect him unless said character has access to Lazarus machine. It would also be a good idea if every writer and editor tried to read each other's material, to make sure that they know what's going on.

After that, though, I think that a writer has the right to rewrite history if he wishes. If, to create an example, **WONDER WOMAN** #4 said Steve Trevor's sister had died, and such a reference was never again mentioned in 30 years, I would not object to seeing his sister return (maybe she was in a coma; maybe he just thought she had died; maybe she was cloned!) In other words, go ahead and change continuity. Take Dramatic Licenses. If a reader objects, give him a wisecrack like Mort Weisinger did for so many years. Pick up any old issue of **JIMMY OLSEN,** and just look at all those boo-boos. Mort just laughed them aside, and nobody minded.

So why don't you just sit back, chuckle softly to yourself, and admit that continuity is a pretty moronic idea, and that it can go to Hellespont, as far as you're concerned. Will you do that for me? Thanks.

Dave Blanchard
2709 Woodside Dr.
Rockford, Illinois 61109

Though we disagree with some of your points, Dave, we have to admit that you make a strong, valid statement for your case. We won't comment at this time, since we expect there will be a great deal of response to your letter from those who prefer a tightly-woven continuity. How about it readers? Here's a chance to sound off your own opinions on this subject. We'll be happy to print the best comments on these pages. In the meantime, Dave, there is something we question in your letter. Why do you represent Mr. Pasko as someone who wants to tie up all the wildly dangling threads of continuity? His article on the continuity of *WONDER WOMAN (AWODCC* #15) would indicate that he favors dramatic license when warranted. In other words, he's closer to AGREEING with you than DISAGREEING with you. But maybe we can get Marty to speak for himself in a future column.—CB

Dear Editor:

The **Wonder Woman** edition of **AWODCC** is the first issue I've had in a long time. Through my own stupid neglect I only bought the well-heralded, now-classic Legion issue. I always told myself that I really wasn't all that interested in the subject material (how can anyone deceive themselves like that?) Seeing #15 made me realize the value and quality of the magazine and I'm **really** sorry now I didn't buy the other 13.

Getting more support from fans for the **Amazing World of Letters** is a terrific idea. It's amazing how many fans don't realize that the power of the pen can actually **change** an editor's policies. Letter writing gets results! Who knows—maybe a future comic writer great will have his first letter published in your column.

One final word: Is it possible in the near future that **AWODCC** will be published more frequently? How am I gonna wait such a long time for the next issue?

There's only one word a person can use to describe the World of DC Comics . . . and that word is **AMAZING.** You'll hear from me again.

Roma Pohorecky
624 Cathedral Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada R2W0Y8

We'll consider that a PROMISE, Roma. There are no plans to increase the frequency of *AMAZING WORLD* at the present. In terms of the sheer number of editorial and production hours that are spent on each issue, this book is one of the most difficult to put out of all the books DC publishes. We are, however, working very hard on establishing a more regular frequency, and with the help of production —ace, Todd Klein, and our two new woodchucks, we may make it. But it's a labor of love all the way. —CB

We received many letters wondering if we would ever get around to doing the BATTLE-STARS issue we promised lo, those many moons ago. Strictly speaking, the answer is no. However, after next issue's SCIENCE FICTION issue, we are planning a special ROBERT KANIGHER issue, paying tribute to the creator of *Sgt. Rock, Enemy Ace,* the *Metal Men,* and so many other comic book greats, in not only the war line of comics, but every other type of comic. From romance to super-hero, to western, Mr. Kanigher has had a terrific impact in ALL areas, and it should be an issue worth waiting for. In the meantime, don't stop sending us your letters, telling us the kind of things you want to see in *AMAZING WORLD.* We've already got several ideas brewing from suggestions made by readers, but we can't give you the kind of features you'd like to see unless you tell us what they are. We'll be looking forward to hearing from you at AMAZING WORLD OF LETTERS, DC COMICS, 75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, N.Y., N.Y. 10019. Be seeing you.—Cary Burkett.

A MEETING OF THE MIGHTY

As witnessed by
Larry Herndon

It happened in a hotel in the heart of Dallas, Texas, and it was an event of which comic book enthusiasts have dreamed, literally, for decades.

It was a happening unique in the long and colorful annals of comic and was the living embodiment of the front cover of **SHAZAM** #1: the very first meeting of **Superman** (in the flesh) with **Captain Marvel** (in the flesh)!

The occasion was the American Nostalgia Convention, an annual event held in the Southwestern part of these United States. This year, it was hosted by Big D (uh . . . that's Dallas, to all you Northerners) and was its usual four days of frantic fun and frolic for fans of comics, old movies, serials, Star Trek, science-fiction, and who-knows-what-else. And as is usually the case when fans get together, a good time is guaranteed!

However, this year's gathering of the faithful promised to offer a **special** event, something that had been rumored in the fan press for months, something that would set a historic landmark for comic fans to discuss in awed whispers for many years to come.

The convention's guests included Clayton ("THE LONE RANGER") Moore, Noel ("LOIS LANE") Neill, C.C. Beck (famed artist of the golden age CAPTAIN

MARVEL), Grace Lee Whitney ("YEOMAN JANICE RAND" from Star Trek), Kirk ("SUPERMAN" of the serials) Alyn, Jackson ("CAPTAIN MARVEL") Bostwick, and others. It is, however, the later two personalities with whom we are concerned . . .

The final morning of the convention dawned bright and sunny (as it always does in the summertime in Texas) and the fans were up early for a special event that we'd all secretly hoped would take place. There was a tense feeling in the air, a feeling so powerful one could almost reach out and touch it.

The event occurred in the hotel's main ballroom before a standing-room-only crowd, and it began with a thunderous "Shazam!" echoing throughout the hall, followed by the immediate and dramatic appearance of Jackson Bostwick in his bright red and yellow **Captain Marvel** suit, . . . looking every inch the perfect embodiment of The Big Red Cheese!

Then, when Bostwick had taken his place and the loud applause finally died, an excited shout suddenly cut through the air:

"Look! up in the sky!"

"It's a bird!"

"It's a plane!"

No, it was **Superman,** making his entrance from stage left, personified by the still trim and dashingly-handsome figure of Kirk Alyn, resplendent in his world-famous red, blue, and yellow uniform of the mighty Man of Steel!

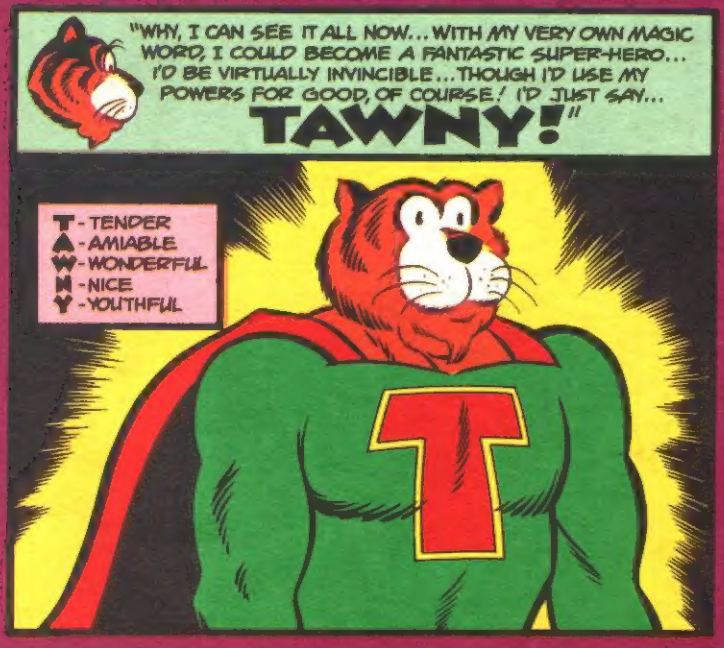
And as you can well imagine, it brought the house down with cheers and applause from those privileged to witness this historic meeting of **Superman** and **Captain Marvel!** They met center stage, shook hands, posed for a few quick pictures from the official convention photographer, and said a few words to the now-hushed audience.

The audience was awed, seeing them together in costume: two of the all-time great comic book heroes, a mere ten feet away!

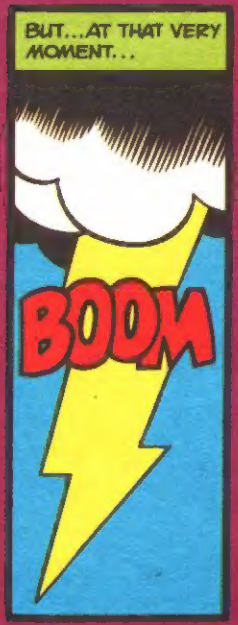
The historic meeting was to last for only a moment, but for a few magic minutes the two most popular super-heroes in the annals of the industry stood shoulder to shoulder as a mighty bulwark against the forces of evil . . . and as the living embodiment of every fan's dreams!

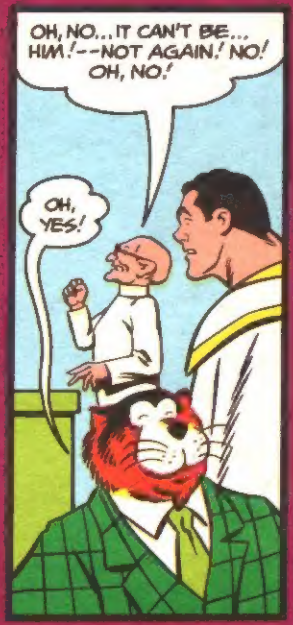
CAPTAIN MARVEL IN THE MAGIC WORD!

HEH HEH HEH! NOW I HAVE THAT BIG RED CHEESE RIGHT WHERE I WANT HIM! WHEN CAPTAIN MARVEL FINDS THAT I HAVE HIS FRIEND, MR. TAWNY, IN MY CLUTCHES, HE'LL BE FORCED TO DO WHATEVER I DEMAND! HEH HEH!
OH, MY.


"WHY, I CAN SEE IT ALL NOW... WITH MY VERY OWN MAGIC WORD, I COULD BECOME A FANTASTIC SUPER-HERO... I'D BE VIRTUALLY INVINCIBLE... THOUGH I'D USE MY POWERS FOR GOOD, OF COURSE! I'D JUST SAY...
TAWNY!"
T - TENDER
A - AMIABLE
W - WONDERFUL
N - NICE
Y - YOUTHFUL
T

"HAH! USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD, EH? NOT ME-- I'D USE' 'EM FOR EVIL... AND, SINCE I AM THE WORLD'S WICKEDEST SCIENTIST, THAT MEANS-HEH!- I'D BE USING 'EM FOR MYSELF WHEN I'D SAY...
SIVANA!"
S - SNIDE
I - IRRITABLE
V - VAIN
A - ANGRY
N - NASTY
A - AWFUL
S





AND...
YOU SEE, SIVANA-- WE CAN WISH FOR ALL KINDS OF MAGIC WORDS, BUT CAPTAIN MARVEL REALLY HAS ONE!
RIGHT, MR. TAWNY-- I GOT IT FROM AN OLD WIZARD NAMED--
DON'T SAY IT! I KNOW! I KNOW!
AND SO DO WE! RIGHT, READERS?

JOHN WORKMAN '78